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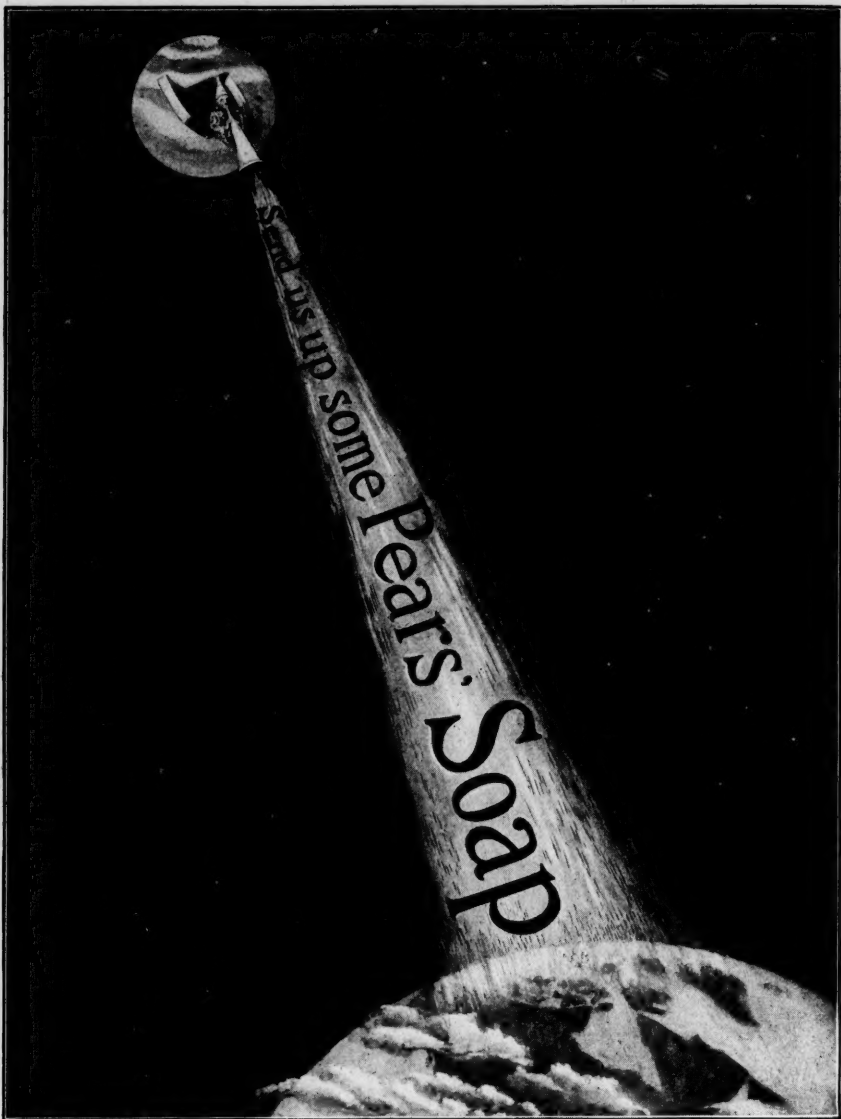
MAGAZINE

AUG. 1909

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Vol. IX

No. 5

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

AUGUST

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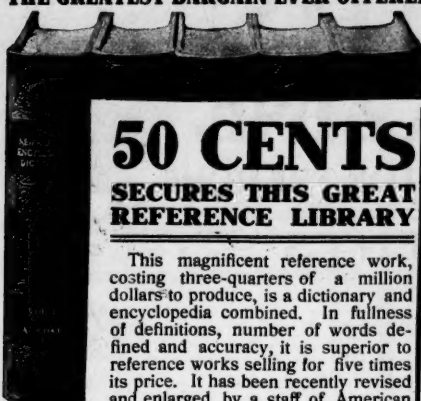
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Monthly Publication issued by SMITH PUBLISHING HOUSE, 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
 ORMOND G. SMITH, President, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City; GEORGE C. SMITH, Secretary and Treasurer,
 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 9

AUGUST, 1909

NUMBER 5

THEATRICAL ART STUDIES



PHOTO BY
HALL M.

FLORA ZABELLE
in
The Mascot







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MISS SUSIE PITT
In "The Beauty Spot"



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MISS JOSEPHINE BRANDELL
In "The Beauty Spot"







MISS LILLIAN WIGGINS
In "The Beauty Spot"

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MISS EILEAN BECKWITH
In "The Beauty Spot"

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MISS MOLLIE HOWELL
With "The Boy and the Girl"

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With "The Boy and the Girl"



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Will appear in "The Flag Lieutenant"

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Starring in "A Woman's Way"

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MISS MAUDE ODELL
In "Love Watches"

Photo by Bangs, N. Y.

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MISS G. CECIL KERN
In "The Man of the Hour"

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MISS MARY BOLAND
Leading woman with John Drew

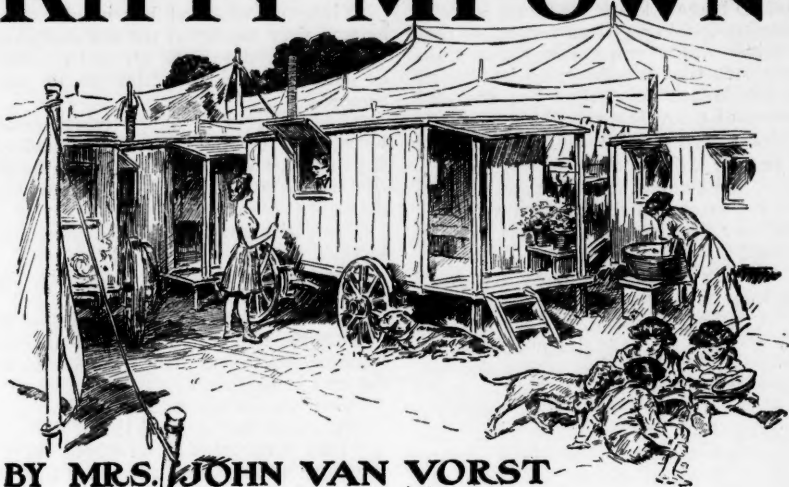
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MISS DORIS KEANE
In "A Happy Marriage"

Photo by Sarny, N. Y.

KITTY MY OWN!



BY MRS. JOHN VAN VORST

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

CHAPTER I.

O'HAGAN was in a very bad humor. Nothing had gone as it should for a week. There had been no real life to the show, no snap to the performance since the snake charmer had fought with Alice O'Hagan, the manager's daughter, and left in a rage, taking her serpents with her. Now a sick feeling came over Tim O'Hagan whenever he saw the men getting out the posters for advanced trips to distant towns.

"There isn't a blooming thing in the whole circus that's up to the advertisements," he mumbled, "and it won't take long for the whole country to find it out."

Tim's cigar had gone out, and this was a bad sign. When the manager's head was not enveloped in a cloud of smoke, the members of the troupe knew trouble was brewing. He rolled the weed around in his mouth and finally fixed it between his teeth. O'Hagan was a big, burly Irishman. During the

last two years he had carted his show around to the towns where a real circus would scorn to flap its tent, making a pile of money by the way, and he wasn't going to give in now at the first round of ill luck.

As he sat at his end of the breakfast table—for he took his meals right in with the rest of the performers at the feeding tent—he cast his professional eye over the assembled gang. Almost every one of them was doing double service. The trapeze experts were ring acrobats, the equestrian star did juggling, and the lion tamer, Von Hessner, was advertised under another name as the "Wonderful Austrian Knife-Thrower."

What bothered O'Hagan the most, as he dug his teeth into his cigar end, was his failure to get the right sort of girl to work with the Austrian in his knife act. He had thought at first of confiding the job to Miss Smithers, the costumer and cat trainer; but Miss Smithers had such a sharp-pointed nose and angular elbows that nobody could care

much if the knife-thrower did miss his aim. No, for the number to be a good one, O'Hagan knew he must have a stunning-looking girl as target, so that a shiver might run through the audience each time the Austrian let fly one of his knives to outline the rounded curves of a lovely figure.

But where could he find such a girl?

Just at this moment of his meditations, some one called O'Hagan's name. He turned in an ill-humored way and saw one of the circus hands coming toward him.

"There's a lady wants to see you," the man said, touching his cap.

"A lady?" growled O'Hagan. "Let her go to——" He did not finish his remarks; for, hurrying across the dining tent he perceived the lady in question, and a glance sufficed to revive his lagging faith in his lucky star. She was undoubtedly wonderfully pretty, with a mass of blonde hair, and the grace of her figure could be felt, though she wore a long cloak buttoned up to her chin. She had on a soft felt hat, and her hands were thrust into her pockets.

"Is this Mr. O'Hagan?" she asked breezily.

"It is."

"Are you taking on more people?"

Tim O'Hagan pulled the cigar out of his mouth and leaned his hands on the table.

"Well," he said, "I feel like turning a few off."

She was quick and noticed his irritation.

"Then you'll have to take on a lot more! What's the matter with these?"

"Oh! I don't know." Tim extracted a match from his pocket, struck it deliberately, and lighted up his jaded weed. "It looks like they were hungry."

She followed his eyes which traveled around the big tent where every man-jack of them was putting down his solid breakfast of ham, eggs, beefsteak, and buckwheat cakes.

"I've come to apply for a job," said the girl. "I saw your show yesterday.

I think it's fine. Have you anything I could do?"

O'Hagan looked at her indulgently; he was very indulgent toward anything that was good to look at, and a cloud of smoke enveloped him as he answered:

"There's a lot of things lying round loose, and I wouldn't call it stealing if you took any of them. But the question is: What can you do? Can you dance?"

The girl showed a row of gleaming teeth.

"Never danced a step in my life, but I could learn."

As he ran through the list of accomplishments, she confessed the same ignorance, the same willingness, and at the end he said:

"Can you do any acts at all?"

"No, none, but I could learn."

"This is no school," he stated rather sharply, "and we haven't got no time to teach folks."

But his voice was not as discouraging as his words, and he took a fresh whiff at the cigar, while the girl inwardly thanked him for not asking the only question she had dreaded. Apparently he did not care what her reasons were for joining the circus. Relieved at this, she unfastened her coat, threw it back, and stood jauntily with one hand on her hip. As she did so Von Hessner, the lion tamer, having finished his breakfast, passed behind her on his way out. O'Hagan slapped his fist down on the table. In imagination he had already seen the girl before him in the spangles and the bright colors of the brand-new, unused costume.

"Have you got nerve?" he asked her quickly. Before she could speak, he added: "Don't be telling me you could learn it!"

"I don't have to," she retorted, "I was born with that."

"Well," said the showman, "I've got just about one position for you, and it's the sort that a bad throw might leave vacant at any time. Would you be willing to stand up against a target and let an Austrian devil throw knives around your head? Would you," he continued

more professionally, "let our best artist use you in his star performance?"

Quick as a flash she answered:

"Let's see the man first."

O'Hagan turned around and called over his shoulder:

"Send me Von Hessner."

He did not speak again, but sat enveloped in a cloud of smoke, whistling under his breath, softly tapping the table, interested, hopeful, ambitious; the enthusiasm of the newcomer had given him just the stimulus he needed.

Von Hessner entered from the back of the tent. He was a tall, fine-looking man, with regular features. His hair was arranged with that especial care which seems to indicate that each separate capillary has its name and place on the owner's head. A part which started in the middle of his forehead ran, clean cut, to the nape of his neck, and the somewhat imperial expression which this gave him was accentuated by the upturned ends of his mustache that rose like two crescents.

"You want me, Mr. O'Hagan?" he asked.

The showman gave a sideways nod.

"This lady does."

Von Hessner, turning, found himself face to face with the handsomest woman he had even seen. He bowed with much politeness and grace, but his salutation was not at once returned. The girl considered him in a way both to please and puzzle a man. She looked into his eyes, and then she said carelessly to O'Hagan:

"I guess he's all right. Did you ever miss your aim?"

"Never, lady," he answered gravely. "Never," he said again.

In the moment that these two exchanged glances—the young man overcome with surprise to find himself confronted by so much sparkling beauty, the young girl studying the artist into whose hands she was to place her life—there was a sudden warmth of feeling kindled which passed unnoticed by O'Hagan, the manager.

"This young lady," he said slowly, "Miss—"

"Miss Kitty Malone," she prompted.

"Miss Katherine Malone," the showman continued, "is going to star with you, if she can keep her nerve. I will call a rehearsal in half an hour, and if things go I'll make terms with you at once. We start for Plattsville at midnight. We give an afternoon performance there to-morrow. Could you be coming right along with us?"

"Yes," replied Miss Malone. "I've got my things all there outside the tent."

O'Hagan laughed.

"You're the right sort. Didn't know how to do a single trick and yet came to stay. What the devil made you think of joining a show?"

Miss Malone colored, hesitated a little, and bit her lip. Then she tossed her head, half looked at the Austrian and at O'Hagan as though she were asking herself whether or not she should tell them the truth, and said:

"Love of adventure, I guess. Dying for a chance to show my nerve! After all, a circus is as good as anything else to make your living in, isn't it?"

Whether or not O'Hagan saw that she did not intend to make him her confidant, he said nothing more, for he was too delighted to have secured the services of so stunning a girl, to trouble himself further about the whys and wherefores of her presence. He lighted another cigar—the rapidity with which the first had been consumed argued well for Miss Kitty's future—and then he beckoned to one of the grooms and, pointing to Miss Malone, he said:

"Show this new young lady to Miss Smithers' room." Turning to the girl, he added: "Miss Smithers is the costumer. She'll fix you up all right. She's the star member of our troupe."

Miss Malone had no sooner disappeared than O'Hagan gave a low whistle which brought the dwarf of the company running to his side.

"Francis," he said, "go tell Dundas I want him."

"Jim Dundas? All right," said the dwarf, and like a flash he darted off around the tent, behind the seats, calling: "Hello, Dundas! Has any one seen Dundas?" And on he ran like a pony to the stables, to the harness tent,

to the kitchens, asking everywhere: "You haven't seen Jim, have you?"

Jim Dundas was the life and soul of the circus. It was natural to look for him everywhere at once. O'Hagan was the manager and Jim was only a clown, but he could beat every gymnast and trapeze performer in his own stunt; he could juggle and ride like a breeze, and he no sooner appeared in the ring with his whitewashed face and his scarlet mouth, his black eyebrows and his close-shaven head, capped by a microscopic felt hat, than the audience, big, little, men, women, and children, began to grin in anticipation of one of Jim's stories.

At last one of the grooms called out to the dwarf:

"Where is he? Well where do you suppose? Petting his baby, of course."

And at this the dwarf trotted off in the direction of that particular part of the circus grounds reserved for the trained animals; the geese that played dominoes, and the educated pig that ate with its knife and fork, and the zebra that did nothing at all but show its stripes, and Jim Dundas' own especial pet, the donkey. Jim had his arm around the donkey's neck and was murmuring: "Come kiss your honey boy," when the dwarf Francis arrived on the scene of action and announced rather emphatically:

"Say, Mr. Dundas, the boss wants you."

Dundas, rubbing meanwhile the donkey's back as carefully as though it had been a favorite silk hat, glanced leisurely at the dwarf and said:

"Just tell Mr. O'Hagan that he might as well light another cigar. I'll be along when I get my baby's toilet done."

Meanwhile the groom had led Miss Malone as far as the apartments of Miss Smithers, the property manager and costumer of the troupe. Her "room" was a box on wheels, with a little flight of steps leading up to the door. Having been announced by her guide, Miss Malone called out: "Can I come in?" And she had no sooner crossed the threshold than she realized from the

cat trainer's manner what an important person she must be in the O'Hagan's circus.

"Mr. O'Hagan sent me," she explained apologetically, glancing instinctively around at the odds and ends with which the walls of the little wagon were hung.

"Just like him," the cat tamer sputtered, "if there's anything up I'm always the one called on. Well, what did he say I could do for you?"

She peered over her glasses as she put this question to Miss Malone, who could see her pale blue eyes through a fringe of corkscrew curls. The sharp tip of her nose was very rosy and suggested recent tears so evidently that the girl took heart and explained how she had been engaged to perform with Mr. Von Hessner and that she had come to ask for a costume, in order to rehearse at once.

Her hearer was skeptical.

"Did Tim O'Hagan," she asked, "suppose that I was going to give you the new outfit?"

"He said you'd be sure to fix me up, that you were the star member of his troupe."

"He'd better show some gratitude," she returned grudgingly. "I'm the only member of the troupe that hasn't fought with Miss Alice O'Hagan."

But Tim's compliment had touched her, and she set about to hunt out from the m  le a costume that would do for rehearsing. Miss Malone eagerly eyed the collection of properties; gold shields and bucklers, purple mantles, mousquetaire high boots, spangled tights and trunks, thrown pell-mell together in a state of dire dilapidation, which did not prevent their seeming, to a novice, wonderfully like the real thing.

Out of the collection Miss Smithers chose several garments rather more forlorn than the rest, and tossed them toward the girl, remarking as she did so: "I guess these'll fit you."

Then, having made some suggestions as to the advisability of wasting no time in view of certain irascible propensities on the part of the manager, Miss

Smithers added in a tone more friendly than her previous icy concessions:

"You'd better dress here, so's I can see you're all right."

It is common to those whom nature has condemned to play but a very unimportant part on the romantic side of life, to pry with peculiar and tenacious curiosity into the affairs of others. Doubtless Miss Smithers, in the dreams peculiar to single ladies of her age, figured ever as a heroine, misunderstood and condemned by circumstances to live

which lay in a basket by her chair, she began to ply her needle, keeping one eye free to scrutinize the newcomer while she determined upon the easiest plan for prompting a confidence. Miss Malone, meanwhile, with hands that trembled slightly, had begun her change of costume, feeling very much, by this mere putting off of an outer garment, as though she were casting aside all her past life preparatory to taking on an entirely new phase of existence. She responded somewhat distractedly to the



She had on a soft felt hat, and her hands were thrust into her pockets.

among people too base to appreciate her delicate qualities. Doubtless, too, she appeared to herself as possessed of a subtle sense of penetration in getting at the heart secrets of all those with whom she came in contact. Thus, as though to right the injustice constantly done her, and by way of excusing to herself her unconscionable inquisitiveness, she doted especially upon two things: gossiping about others and making others gossip about themselves.

Having now picked up some mending

cat tamer's interrogatory, answering laconically that she was from Tupperville, that she was eighteen years old, an orphan, that her father had been a farmer. At this juncture Miss Smithers looked up from under the rigid row of curls and queried:

"Well, how'd you ever stray into a circus?"

The color flashed into the girl's cheeks, not unnoticed by her companion who muttered a comprehensive "Humph!" to which Miss Malone responded as airily as possible:

"Why, I suppose I was attracted to the circus just as any one else might be—just as you were."

Hereupon Miss Smithers laid down her sewing and, shaking her head so violently that the curls fairly danced before her glasses, she exclaimed:

"Well, I pity you, then!"

"Were you unhappy, too?" the girl asked, snatching eagerly at this first touch of feeling in the cat tamer's manner and regretting instantly the confession her remark implied.

"I guess I know as much as any one does about suffering," was the response made between narrow lips, so tightly pressed together as to have almost disappeared. "And I know something else, too," added the cat tamer, through the same little colorless aperture. "There's only one kind of unhappiness in this world. The rest is imitation. The kind that counts comes from one cause, and that cause"—she hitched forward on her rocker and leaned over very close to the young girl—"that cause is *men*."

"Oh! Do you suppose that's so?"

"I know it is. They're a wicked lot."

"Not all," Miss Malone protested.

"Yes, all, and if you don't think so yet, just wait a while."

Feeling a sudden awkwardness come over her because of the turn the conversation had taken just at the moment when she had finished dressing in this fancy costume which seemed opposed to the sentiments astir in her heart, Miss Malone gracefully swung her long coat over her shoulders, sat down by the cat tamer, and, with an impulse prompted by loneliness and by that imperious necessity which impels those who are in love to confide in their own sex, she started to tell the story for which Miss Smithers had been waiting. It was a man, of course, who had prompted Miss Malone's engagement with the O'Hagan circus. A man with whom she had grown up in her native village, and who when his parents died had left home himself to follow a circus, in the hope that he might earn enough one day to go to college.

"You never heard of him, did you?"

asked Miss Malone. "His name is, Giles—Frank Giles—"

But just at this moment O'Hagan himself put his head in over the top of the little flight of steps and called the newcomer to her first rehearsal.

Whenever a rehearsal was announced for a new performer in the O'Hagan circus, all the artists flocked out of the wagons and tents to watch the stranger practice his "act." These professionals were more difficult to please than the real public, and as Kitty Malone came into the ring with her red tights and spangled corsage, she was frightened to see all the troupe assembled on the benches in the big tent. There were the Pierantoni family, the mother, father, and six children, all tumblers and all so exactly alike that you couldn't tell them apart even when they were dressed differently. Miss Smithers was there, and Francis the dwarf, and the fat boy with his mother, and several lady equestrians, not to mention the "odd numbers" who filled out the programme by doing a variety of things.

At the end of the ring there was a big target against which Miss Malone was to take her stand. O'Hagan had them bring a chair for him and a table with a glass of water and a box of cigars. Behind him stood Jim Dundas.

Kitty tried to conceal her uneasiness. As a matter of fact she was more rattled by the eight pair of eyes which the Pierantoni family glued on her, and by the snorts of the fat boy and the ironical silence of Jim Dundas, than she was at the thought of the sharp knives whose points Von Hessner was trying with the tip of his finger as he lifted them one by one from the basket in which Francis had brought them to him.

When the Austrian had finished toying with the weapons he walked over to Miss Malone and asked her to take her place. Then he lifted her arm above her head and fixed it in a position against the target, just as a photographer moves your arm around, Kitty reflected, except that Von Hessner's hand was very cold and it trembled so that she could not help wondering if he were afraid.

From his pocket the Austrian drew a bit of charcoal. All around Kitty's head he marked a heavy black line. Then he asked the girl to move aside, and in an instant the knives were flying through the air, striking, with marvelous precision, the mark, quivering as they plunged deep into the wooden board on a level with where Kitty's knees had been a moment before.

"We begin at the feet and work up," Von Hessner explained; "this keeps the excitement growing—growing——"

"Go on," O'Hagan grunted.

The knives continued to fly, creeping steadily upward about the shoulders and head, and as each one entered the mark, clear of the "life line," O'Hagan sent a fresh whiff of smoke into the air, the fat boy chuckled with glee, and Kitty uttered an expressive "Oh!"

When the silhouette was completely encircled, O'Hagan gave a sideways nod to Kitty.

"There's nothing the matter with the artist, I guess," he said.

Von Hessner cast an approving glance toward the beautiful girl beside him. He twirled the ends of his mustache and then he ran his fingers down the part which divided his hair on either side of his head. Dundas, watching his operation, murmured:

"Shall I call the barber for you?"

But Von Hessner, not deigning to respond, took, instead, Kitty's hand and led her forward as though they were about to dance a lancers together.

As the Austrian let fly the first knife, instinctively Kitty closed her eyes. And she kept them shut as she heard the point strike the board and felt the cold blade of steel quivering against the side of her ankle. But she relied on Von Hessner, and it seemed to her as though he were saving her from some mortal danger and as though she had entrusted her life to him. Yet she noticed that the knives came slower and slower, a long lapse between them. Already they outlined her as far as her waist, right and left, and she was beginning to overcome the first shiver of fear which had run over her, when suddenly she saw

Von Hessner put his hand to his brow, as though he were dizzy.

"Say what you like, Mr. O'Hagan," he exclaimed, "I won't, I can't throw another knife! I've lost my nerve."

O'Hagan gnawed at the end of his cigar, preparatory to an outburst; the fat boy's head settled down into his shoulders like a turtle's; all the eight Pierantonis rose; and Jim's expressive mouth opened with the peculiar slant which always set the audience to grinning.

The Austrian had leaned up against the back of O'Hagan's chair, and he ran his hand up across his forehead as though to wipe the cold perspiration from it.

Miss Malone didn't know whether she ought to move or to remain standing with her hand up over her head as Von Hessner had placed it. It was Jim who was the first to think of her.

"Come on over," he said; "the Austrian lion's afraid of hurting you!"

She started toward them, not taking her eyes off O'Hagan, who looked as though he had swallowed his cigar whole and was making frantic efforts to get it back again.

"All this is not business," he mumbled. "Where are we going to end if we keep on at this rate?"

To which question, a voice, that of his bad angel, Alice O'Hagan, his daughter, answered beside him:

"There's only one thing to do, and that's simple enough; just tell Miss Malone to go back to where she came from."

There was a profound silence.

Then suddenly a tremendous braying sounded forth from the depths of the stables. Jim shouted:

"Shut up, Baby! Nobody asked your advice. The lion's got the floor."

The fat boy stretched his neck well out of his shoulders; the eight pairs of Pierantoni eyes were fixed on Kitty like so many chicken's eyes fixed on a basket of bran; Alice O'Hagan wore an expression of triumphant jealousy; and Dundas alone saw that Kitty had grown pale, not from any fear she had of the knife-throwing, but because of

the dread she had that she would have to go back to Miss Smithers with her new costume, don her old coat again, button it up under her chin, and return by the way she had arrived. With the calm of one who knows that his words have weight, he said:

"I'm no lion tamer, I'm only a donkey trainer, but I'm not afraid of this young girl here. She's got an awful lot of pluck and you don't often see a prettier face. She chose to come and work here with us in the ring, instead of going to sit up there on the benches with the audience. I vote that we attach her to the troupe. She can share our luck, good or bad."

O'Hagan puffed away, enveloping himself and Alice in propitious clouds of smoke. Already he fancied the circus lighted, the tent crowded, every seat occupied, and Kitty, the pupil of Dundas, the celebrated lady equestrian, sending kisses to the audience, wild with enthusiasm. A new "hein-heon" from the direction of Baby's stall brought him back to reality.

"Agreed!" he cried. "Jim, you can take this girl for your pupil and train her. You've got faith in her. But there's one thing," he added, "you ought to attend to; not letting your baby set up such an awful row, on occasions like this."

"I'll hang a stone on her tail," Jim answered. "I guess that'll fix her."

Then he held out his big, strong hand to Kitty Malone, who looked into his eyes with an expression of true gratitude, repeating his words:

"I'll join the troupe, Mr. Dundas, and I'll share the troupe's luck, bad or good!"

CHAPTER II.

The flap of the big tent was lifted and Kitty Malone came out.

On this side of the circus grounds an enclosure had been formed with canvas strips upheld by temporary posts. Around the inner square thus formed the wagons were lined up. The effect was that of a picturesque village somewhat sheltered from the gaze of the common herd. The little wagons had

windows with blinds and curtains just like "real" houses, and there were people sleeping, living in them, and even doing their cooking—as was evident from the wreaths of smoke curling upward above the roofs, blown heavenward by miniature chimneys which looked like pipestems. On the porches there was an attempt at decoration in the shape of flower pots and bird cages, while hidden among the four wheels there were several big dogs chained, on the watch, to keep off marauders. In the open space without there were clothesline stretched hither and thither, upon which were hung various garments of brilliant hue—sky blue, rose pink—most of them darned and patched.

Kitty Malone had on the costume she wore for rehearsing. It was composed of the rather faded tights which Miss Smithers had mended as best she could, and a short red velvet skirt that came about to the knees. Yet, though this circus get-up was somewhat tawdry in the dazzling sunlight, Kitty Malone's own youth and beauty were as dazzling as the sun itself. From the top of her head, crowned with its masses of golden hair, to the tip of her neatly laced sandals, which showed to advantage the high-arched instep of Dundas' pupil, she was radiant. Her cheeks were glowing, her slender waist swayed as she walked, moving with a natural grace which the new physical exercises had even augmented.

Kitty took a look around to get her bearings. She was bent for Dundas' wagon, the finest of the lot, except of course O'Hagan's. She approached Jim's domain, with an assurance that meant she was confident of being well received. When she had come close up under one of the windows, she tapped gently along the sill with the end of her riding whip, and at the same time she called out:

"Hello, Mr. Dundas! Are you there?"

She could hear the sound of a chair being pushed back, a step on the wooden floor, the scraping of a bolt, and in the window sash Jim's face appeared,

smiling. Like the judge in "Alice in Wonderland," he had a pen behind his ear.

"What can I do for you, Miss Malone?" he asked gayly.

"They've just sent me word," she said, "that the ring will be free for me at three o'clock. Will you be able to give me my lesson then?"

Dundas had undertaken to make an expert horsewoman of Kitty. He winked his eye in a knowing way now and said:

"Be so kind as to step in for a moment. You can count on me all right. I'm at your service."

No sooner had Kitty put her foot on the flight of steps which led up to Jim's wagon than four of the little Pierantonis darted out from different directions to see what was happening. And as the door closed on her laced sandals, the following bit of extraordinary news had already been communicated to Madame Pierantoni:

"Dundas has invited somebody up into his wagon, and that somebody is Miss Malone!"

Kitty was quite aware of the fact that she was the object of especial favor; for Dundas, friendly as he was with all the artists of the troupe, defended his own door against intruders as a dragon defends his den. So, naturally, she was flattered that he should make an exception in her case. There was of course no question of sentiment between them, he didn't care for her and she was not trying to make him; yet, just the same, Kitty was a woman, and it didn't displease her to see that evidently there was no rival who held the first place in Dundas' thoughts and in his heart. There wasn't a single photograph of a pretty girl on the four walls of his miniature parlor, which were pasted over with programmes, posters, medals, that had been given to the clown by his admirers. They were all souvenirs connected with his work, as though the circus by itself had been enough to fill his entire existence.

There was, however, on the table an open inkstand, and a letter begun. Dundas had been writing when Kitty had

called him from outside. He had thrown partly over the letter—to dry the ink, of course—a bit of blotting paper which covered most of the sheet. On the envelope which lay waiting for the address no name was written yet.

So Kitty couldn't know who it was the clown corresponded with, and naturally she couldn't very well inquire, although, as a matter of fact—perhaps because of the curiosity which is said to be keener in women than in men—the pretty Miss Malone would a thousand times rather have said to Dundas: "Whom are you writing to?" than to have asked him about her lesson.

If Jim guessed what was in her thoughts, he did not think it incumbent upon him to enlighten her. On the contrary he only roused her curiosity further, without meaning to, of course, by saying:

"I'll have to ask you to excuse me if I'm about half an hour late. Let them bring in the white horse, and you can get your seat while you wait. It won't be long, but I must finish this letter and take it myself to the post office. There is no one here I could trust with it."

Kitty held out her hand gracefully and said:

"All right, then, in half an hour."

But as she crossed the little inclosure to go back into the circus she couldn't help thinking to herself:

"It must be an awfully important letter for Dundas to keep me waiting this way, and for him to take it himself to the post office."

Evidently, as she supposed, the letter was very important, for Jim's face grew serious as he traced the last lines of this epistle, signed it, wrote the address, read it over carefully and put it in his pocket without sealing it. Yet the adventure connected with this missive was not sad evidently; there was a glow of pride, of real happiness on the kindly visage of the clown. Whatever Jim wrote was sure to be like himself, true and loyal.

He took his hat down from the peg where it hung, opened the door, shut it carefully behind him, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and then, with his



Miss Malone gracefully swung her long coat over her shoulders, and sat down by the cat tamer.

quick step, he descended the flight of steps, crossed the inclosure, went out of the circus grounds, and started down the board sidewalk of the village in the direction of the post office.

Just as he reached it he saw the fat boy and his mother disappearing behind the swinging door. With somewhat of a scowl he kept on the boardwalk past the building, out in the direction of the country. He was in a great hurry to get his letter off, but he was even more eager to do this without witnesses, and he had no confidence whatever in the fat boy and his parent. When he saw them at last come out, he quickened his step. The post office was empty, and he rapped on the window:

"Will you please give me a money order for eighty dollars?"

At the same time he put the money down on the counter.

"What's the address?" asked the post-mistress.

"Mr. Frank Giles, Williams College, Williamstown."

There was a scratching of the invisible lady's pen while she prepared the document which Dundas waited for. When it was ready, Jim leaned forward to pick it up, but he sprang back with a start. Beside the invisible lady he had caught sight of an old plaid skirt, which he knew only too well, and a ratty little muff in monkey skin, moth-eaten and forlorn, in which somebody was hiding two hands. And this "somebody" was the cat tamer, the property manager of the O'Hagan circus, Miss Smithers.

It was too late for any recriminations. Jim seized the money order, stuffed it into the letter, sealed the envelope, threw it into the box, and left the post office. But he did not go very far. He strutted up and down before the door, spying for Miss Smithers' exit. He was inwardly raging to think that all this time Kitty waited for him in the ring, mounted on the white horse, no doubt growing every moment more impatient. But he had decided to finish once for all with this little incident, and so he paced to and fro like a bear in its cage.

When at last Miss Smithers came out, Dundas said to her in the tone of an ogre:

"Miss Smithers!"

"Oh," she cried, "it's you, Mr. Dundas, is it?"

"Oh, don't pretend you didn't know I was here; you were in the post office all the time I was, and you heard perfectly distinctly the name I gave a few minutes ago for that money order."

"I assure you— Really, Mr. Dundas—"

"Don't try to assure me anything. Just listen to what I have to say to you. You've got ears, haven't you? And a tongue? Well, it's too late to stop up your ears, more's the pity, but your tongue—"

The poor cat tamer was so stunned by this sudden outburst on the part of a man whom she had always considered the soul of gentleness and mercy that she didn't know in the least what to say. Her hands were trembling so they made the moth-eaten monkey-skin muff palpitate as though it were still alive.

Cruelly Jim added:

"You've got a tongue, all right, Miss Smithers; we all know that. Well, if ever in its moments of wildest gossiping that chattering tongue should repeat the name you overheard in the post office, I'm afraid I'll have to remove that tongue! And I'll give it to one of your cats for his supper!"

He was almost out of sight before Miss Smithers and the monkey-skin muff, hugged tight one against the other, had stopped shaking with wonder and amazement.

In the circus tent which was always half dark when the big lights were not turned on, Kitty went turning, round and round the ring, on the back of the white horse. It was an old beast, with a steady gait, like the regular ticking of a clock. Under a thick layer of freshly applied chalk, it looked fairly white, as did the saddle and the bridle and the reins. Kitty knew she could trust herself to this old animal, and, tired of waiting for Dundas, she let the

horse do as he pleased, without directing him.

All of a sudden the flap at the extreme end of the tent was pushed back.

"At last," thought Kitty, "there's Jim!"

But it was not Jim. It was Von Hessner, the lion tamer, who came in.

The Austrian was tall, fine-looking, wonderfully well-groomed, and as self-satisfied as ever. He came grandly across the ring, calling out: "Ho! ho, there!" as though Kitty had asked him to make the white horse stop. When the old beast, who didn't want better than to get her wind, had obeyed, Von Hessner came up, and, without so much as asking leave, he laid hold of Kitty's bridle.

From where Kitty sat on her saddle she looked straight down on to the geometrical part which separated into two equal halves the Austrian's curly hair. She had to lower her eyes in order to meet the cold, fixed, sly gaze of his eyes which were as blue as porcelain.

She couldn't have told at this particular moment whether Von Hessner displeased her or whether she found him strikingly distinguished, whether she were shocked that he had deliberately stopped her horse or whether she was glad that he had come to interrupt the drowsy giddiness that was overcoming her as she turned round and round the ring.

But Von Hessner didn't give her time to collect her thoughts before he said with an impressive manner:

"This is a bit of good luck for me, Miss Malone, better than I could have dared to hope for!"

Rather surprised she asked:

"Why, what do you mean?"

"For two whole weeks I have sought a chance to talk with you alone. Now it has come."

Half amused, half piqued, Kitty answered:

"I never try to avoid any one."

"Oh, no," he protested. "You are kindness itself. But you are guarded. Oh, how guarded!"

"It's I who guard myself, I guess

you mean," she said severely. "What are you driving at, Mr. Von Hessner?"

He did not apparently perceive her tone of annoyance, and in a passionate voice he said:

"That idiot Dundas imagines it is because of him I am forced to leave the O'Hagan circus. You don't believe that, do you? You know who is forcing me away from here?"

"Who?"

"You, Miss Malone."

"Me?"

A girl as pretty as Kitty is always secretly a little bit glad to find out that she is upsetting the calm of any man's life, and Von Hessner thought he detected a touch of coquettish satisfaction behind the surprise, real or feigned, which Kitty showed.

He seized the ball on the rebound and in the tone of a man who knows he is good-looking and who is accustomed to making conquests, he continued:

"You, Miss Malone! Don't tell me that you were not aware of this. If I had not loved you madly from the very moment that I saw you, why would my hand have trembled so when I tried to throw the knives around you? This same hand that goes into the very lion's mouth without fear?"

As he spoke he had advanced this same fearless hand as far as Kitty's, where it lightly touched her fingers. But she moved her arm hastily away, and he realized he must not go too far. Von Hessner stopped short and turned his blue eyes from Kitty, as though he could no longer bear to look at her wonderful beauty.

"I shan't refer," he said, "to any possible feeling I may have awakened in your heart. Above all, I shall ask nothing of you before I have had a chance to prove my devotion. But even if you won't let me tell you how I love you, Miss Malone, at least promise that I may be your servant to command, and that you will call upon me——"

Kitty maintained a puzzling silence. The Austrian believed his words were sinking into her heart as he hoped they would.

"Now, to-day, at this very hour," he continued, "I can't endure the thought of leaving you here, alone in this miserable place, between the caprices of Alice O'Hagan, the protection of Dundas, and the stupidity of O'Hagan. You are made to receive applause upon a bigger stage than this one! I beseech you, leave this troupe; I will get an engagement for you. I will make it a stipulation in my own contract."

He stopped, his nostrils dilating, his expression intense; for Kitty had grown suddenly very serious, as though she were reflecting deeply.

Of whom was she thinking? Who was causing upon her lovely face traces of such profound emotion?

Not for one moment had her thoughts dwelt on the good-looking man who was pleading with her. He appeared to her merely as a possible means of attaining the end toward which her whole life was bent at present. For, as she had assured Miss Smithers, in the first moments of confidence, it was not the love of riding, or of parade, or of public applause, which had led her to the O'Hagan circus. She was seeking some one she loved, some one who had himself joined a circus. She had supposed that everybody knew everybody else in circuses. The acrobats and horsemen who were always on the road she fancied were all friends. She had said to herself: "If I'm once among those people I can't help getting track of him, of this man who has given me no sign of himself since he went away."

Yet, so far in the O'Hagan circus, nothing had given her the slightest clue as to the whereabouts of her beloved. She realized now that she might follow this troupe for years and that while they were in the North "he" might be in the West or the South. Thus she was tempted by Von Hessner's proposition. His protestations of love did not horrify her as they would have if they had not suggested a possible chance to escape. Above all, she felt the surest defense against the elegant lion tamer was the loyalty which she believed still lay intact, deep down in her heart, loyalty for the other man.

A sudden movement on the part of Von Hessner roused her from her dream to reality. But the man by her side had mistaken wholly the reason of her silence and the cause of her seeming agitation. He thought that Kitty's emotion was caused by his love-making. Enchanted and at the same time amazed to have so quickly touched her, he forgot his habitual prudence, he let go of the horse's reins, he laid one hand upon Kitty's hands, and with his arm he encircled her waist.

It was a terrible moment for the girl. In vain she showed her anger and cried out: "Let me go! Let go of me or I shall call for help!" It was easy play for the lion tamer to hold her waist in his rigid clasp, while, half angry, half gallant himself, he kept insisting that she should dismount from the white horse's back, saying:

"Come, my little lioness! Don't be angry! It's useless showing your claws to me!"

Suddenly, as these words were on his lips, a fearful blow, dealt from behind straight between the shoulders, exactly in the spot which takes the wind out of a man, caused Von Hessner to cry out, and to let go his hold on Kitty's arm. He turned. Dundas was before him, his arms crossed.

The clown had arrived just in time to hear the end of Von Hessner's fine declaration. He had seen from behind the big tent flap what was going on, and he considered it his right to interfere from the moment that Miss Malone had shown her positive displeasure at the Austrian's advances. How he had suffered—Dundas—to perceive this sleek Austrian caressing Kitty with his eloquence, while she listened to him, silent! But her sudden revulsion when she had cried out made him understand at least that Von Hessner had gone too far, counting too surely on a victory. He could hesitate no longer then. He thrust aside the tent flap and, with one bound forward, his quick step smothered in the tan-bark, he struck out at the lion tamer. Now, before Kitty's very eyes, the two men stood face to face, fraught with emotion at all that

had been said and at all that would never be expressed.

There was a moment's silence during which Von Hessner rolled up his sleeve over his muscular forearm, and stood ready for an attack. But Dundas seemed in no way disconcerted by these preparations.

"It's the second time," he said coolly, "that you have overstepped the bounds which we recognize where women are concerned in this circus. Once was more than enough. You shan't begin a third time!"

"How dare you, you fool!"

Von Hessner let fly from the shoulder, but his fist did not strike its mark. As quick as a flash, Dundas, stooping, had dodged the blow. At the same time he sprang full upon his adversary, striking him headlong in the chest, lifting him off his feet and throwing him. But Dundas fell with him, and Kitty, alarmed, called out: "Help! Help!" which cry brought a generous detachment to the edge of the ring.

First several terrified visages appeared, then others, and in a few minutes the whole troupe was there, each one running as fast as he could to be a bit sooner than his neighbor on the scene of action.

To be sure, if the circle of brawny men who stood as onlookers had wanted to close in upon the combatants, as O'Hagan commanded them to do, the fight would have come promptly to an end. But the acrobats and the grooms, every man of them, left O'Hagan to his useless expostulations, which took the form of a nervous woman's shrill-toned cries of:

"Separate them! I tell you to separate them!"

No one obeyed, partly out of respect, partly out of fear. Out of fear because no one could help feeling that the struggle between the two men on the ground was one for life or death, and that whoever dared intervene did so at his own risk. Out of respect because the two fighters were equally brave and because they had clashed in a question which all presumed to be

jealousy in a love affair, and which took thus the form of a loyal combat.

Von Hessner was the heavier of the two, and Dundas the more agile; so that, linked together in an iron grip, they now rolled upon the ground, now sprang up, now took a fresh hold upon each other, each seeking to strangle his adversary.

There was a time when Kitty, wild with anxiety, thought that Dundas was lost. Von Hessner, who felt the arm of the clown at the back of his head, had, like a flash, clutched Dundas, lifted him in the air, and without letting go of him had thrown him sideways on the ground, endeavoring to crush him under his own weight. A cry went up from the spectators, for the stroke was final had not the Austrian reckoned without the wonderful pliability of the clown. At the very second when his legs were waving in the air, Dundas had succeeded in tripping the lion tamer, so that he encountered only the tan-bark beneath him; and quickly as he was on his feet again, Jim was before him, up and ready for a new fray.

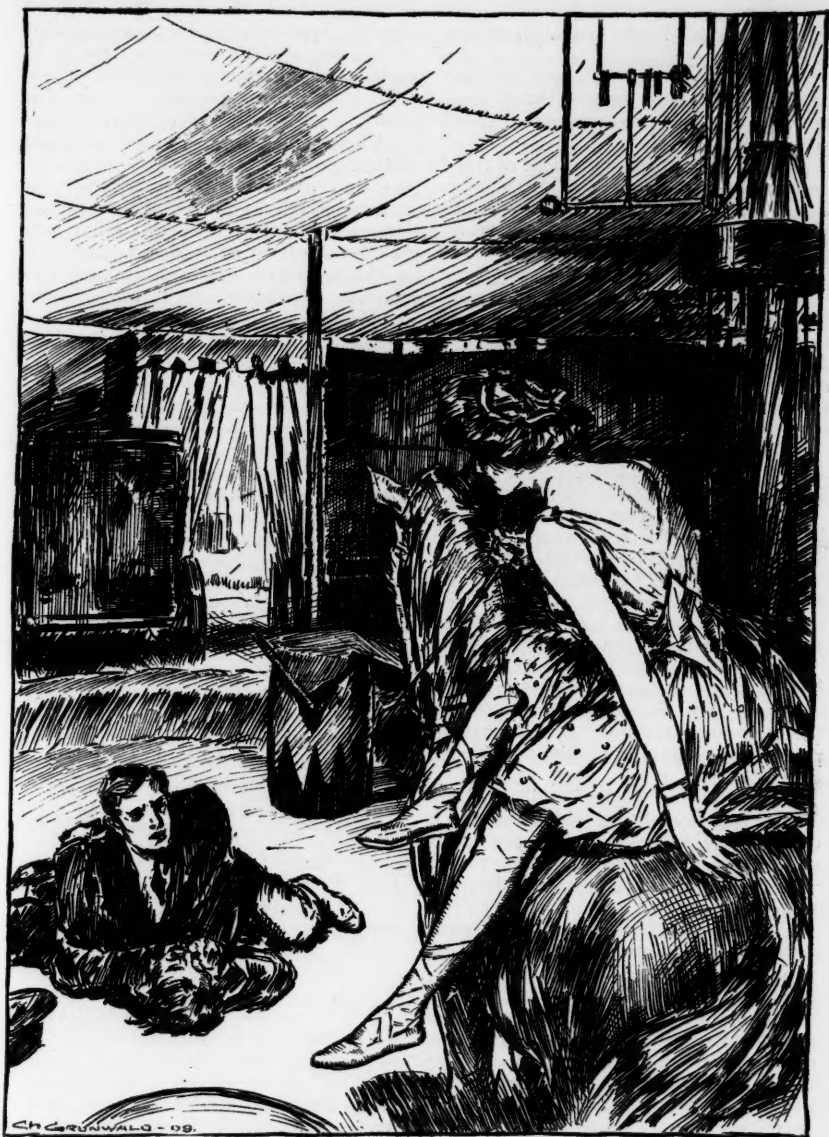
Jim was frightfully pale. There was a stream of red flowing from his ear into his neck. He realized that he must win or desist, and for one moment the thought of taking his enemy's life traversed his mind.

His decision was made as quick as lightning. He passed his left arm around the neck of Von Hessner, put his right hand, which was free, on the Austrian's shoulder, seized his own wrist with the hand which lay around his adversary's throat, and pressed hard, squeezing tight the throat of the enemy.

At the same moment he lifted his eyes, questioning, to Kitty.

What did she want him to do?

In the awful silence which reigned she understood that, as in the days of old, in the time of the gladiators, the clown wished her now to be the arbiter of death or life. A single movement was enough, in the position of the two men, for Dundas, by merely lifting the arm which rested against Von Hessner's shoulder, to completely suffocate him.



But Dundas did not let go. He kept his gaze fixed upon the girl before him.

Kitty realized what Dundas' questioning glance implied.

"Oh, have pity!" she cried. "Let him go!"

But Dundas did not let go. He kept his gaze fixed upon the girl before him, upon her whom Von Hessner had dared to touch.

Before he let go for good he wanted to know definitely whether it was he, Dundas, who was Kitty's champion or whether she were merely supplicating for a miserable wretch whom she loved in spite of everything.

No doubt Dundas read in the eyes of Kitty the desperate gratitude he longed to see there, for an expression of disdain contracted the corners of his mouth as he loosened his hold and let the lion tamer roll, half-unconscious, upon the tan-bark of the circus ring.

CHAPTER III.

It was a soft summer day early in June. Jim's spirits had never been better. The afternoon performance had left him free early enough to take the four-o'clock trolley from North Adams to Williamstown. A lucky chance had just so arranged things that he could run over in this way and spend an hour or two at the college where so many of his letters had found their way during the last year, and with the very roving person to whom the missives had been addressed.

Jim sprang on the trolley like a bird. There was something in the air as it came sweeping down the breezy Berkshires that seemed to exhilarate him.

"I bet Frank'll be surprised," he murmured.

He had got himself up in a neat, well-cut suit of clothes. His hat, his stick, his cravat and gloves were correct and up to date. Aside from the marks of fatigue, which seared the face too often forced to smile under its mask of paint, he appeared like the ordinary business man. But he was happy with the inward sort of content that follows sacrifice. It was great to feel that he was of some tangible good to another human being. From the moment he

had set eyes on Frank Giles he had felt drawn to him. He liked the pluck of this boy, who had left home in the hope of making enough some day to go to college. Dundas had cherished similar wild dreams in his own youth, but "once a clown always a clown."

When Giles joined the O'Hagan troupe nothing had seemed more natural to Jim than to offer this boy the chance which had slipped beyond his own grasp. He felt, in this fellow, ten years younger than himself, a sort of double whom he wanted to indulge with all the benefits denied himself—the pride of ownership.

The trolley sped along, past factories that sent forth their black smoke upon the summer sky, past graveyards whose tombstones glistened white upon the greensward, but Jim's spirits ran higher than the dull consideration of life and death; they sparkled like the flash of electricity that struck from the wires overhead, carrying him forward.

Deposited at the foot of the hill along with the sprinkling of passengers that scatter at any terminus, he set out, past the chapel and along the broad, shady avenue.

The students passed in groups, alone, and he looked at each in the hope of meeting Frank, but without this he had come as far as the dormitory steps, and here he asked the janitor who was sweeping the inner hall:

"Is Mr. Giles here—Frank Giles?"

"No," answered the man rather shortly, "he isn't, nor likely to be."

His manner was so curt Dundas took it as personal, and resented it.

"There's no reason why I shouldn't see Mr. Giles, if he is here," he retorted. "I'm an old friend."

Then rather more decently the man added:

"Well, he isn't here now, and I don't know when he's likely to be back."

"He lives here, doesn't he?"

"Oh," shrugged the janitor, to whom Giles owed a considerable sum of borrowed dollars, "he's off one day and here the next, and here and there and everywhere."

Dundas glanced toward a door which stood open into one of the rooms.

"Look here," he said, "can't we go in there and have a little talk?"

Like the rest of the world who had seen Jim's smile, and who couldn't resist it, the janitor softened, and nodding, he led Jim into the vacant room.

It was not in the benefactor's interest to pry, but he had come far, much was at stake for him, and he was determined to know—to know what? All that this man could tell him? No, but at least one thing he wanted to be sure of. It was Dundas who was responsible for Frank's leaving the circus; it was he who had persuaded him to come to college, and he had used more than words to back up his arguments; he had given the boy two hundred dollars of his own savings, and guaranteed him eighty dollars a month during college year. Now, if this wasn't enough for a fellow to live decently on, he wanted to find it out. He didn't care to be responsible for any man's getting into trouble through the sentimental ambitions of a clown. Jim was ready to do all he could, but he felt it only fair he should know just how things stood, and Giles was a poor correspondent. He had written but three times during the nine months he had been at Williams-town.

"Are you a relative of this young man?" the janitor asked keenly, as though penetrating Dundas' thoughts.

"No," the clown admitted, "but a good friend."

"Well, he needs 'em," the other nodded. "He's got friends enough, heaven knows; but good ones——"

"I know he's very social."

"Social! I guess he is. He spends money enough, too. He's at it night and day. It's quite a sight."

The janitor had long since given up any hopes of making good his loans, but a sudden idea that this "old friend" might have a well-lined pocket egged him on.

"I mean," he said, dropping his voice, "that Mr. Giles is a pretty gay liver—what he can't get here he gets in North Adams, all right. There's

plenty of champagne flowing at his suppers."

The clown, who had grown white without any need of paint, lifted his hand angrily.

"Hold up!" he cried, and fixed the man with his honest eyes. "Does Mr. Giles owe you any money?"

The janitor laughed.

"Well, I'm one of 'em. I don't mind saying it; he does."

"How much?"

"Oh, a matter of twenty-five dollars."

Dundas, without a word, put his hand in his waistcoat and took the amount from his pocket.

"There," he said curtly, "you're one that's paid anyway."

"No"—the janitor shook his head—"not like that. Ask Mr. Giles, and if he tells you the same story, why, then, you'll be satisfied, and I'll be, too. That's all right."

Dundas at least had found the road to the man's heart.

"I want to see Mr. Giles' room before I leave," he said. The janitor led the way up two flights of wooden stairs to the corner door, which he opened with a pass-key.

Hastily, Dundas' eyes made the tour of the room. Everything was in disorder; books and papers lay scattered in confusion, and under the table stood several empty bottles.

What a contrast to the picture he had so often conjured up of this same study! The place, as his mind's eye fancied it, had come to be real, and he felt now there must be a mistake.

"I'm afraid," the janitor began, "that I've been speaking too freely."

"You've made it evident that Frank Giles has enemies," Dundas laughed.

"Well, it's pretty sure he's got one friend."

Jim's eyes continued their investigation of this almost sacred domain. On the walls and mantelpiece there were quantities of photographs in frames, and stuck pell-mell against the edge of the mirror. In vain Dundas sought for his own image. There was not a likeness of him among the motley collection, and for the first time it oc-

curred to him that perhaps Giles was ashamed to have a clown's picture in his keeping.

The janitor, feeling the necessity for excusing his indiscretion, harped back to this subject.

"The truth is," he said, "Mr. Giles is as about as wild a fellow as we've had up here. We all thought after the row at the last freshman banquet that he'd be fired. But he's the sort that drops on their feet every time. He's deep in debt to the hotel proprietress over at North Adams; but she, they say, is head over heels in love with him. Just like his luck!"

"That's all right," Dundas answered, annoyed and distraught. "Giles has no family; I'm about the nearest he's got; you haven't said too much."

The janitor returned to his sweeping in the lower hall, and Dundas sat waiting. There was a tense expression on his face. One could hardly have recognized in it the clown who had that very afternoon amused a crowd at North Adams, and, indeed, it was not Dundas the clown, but Dundas the man, who had found his way at last to this place, whither for almost a year his thoughts had turned, as thoughts will turn, toward the one bright spot which lends color to a life of labor.

He recollected the first day when Giles had joined the circus. How long ago it seemed! A whole new life had started for the boy since then, as the room in which Dundas sat testified. Here were college banners, class pictures, souvenirs of all kinds, which recalled episodes in the present existence—episodes in which Dundas played no part whatever.

It was the striking of the clock which sounded the old slave knell. Jim had let his thoughts wander off into dreams of what might have been, if he could only have had his chance and come to college. But the ringing of the hour brought him back face to face with the facts that he was a clown, and that his next performance was announced for eight o'clock.

Looking for paper on which to leave a message, Dundas opened a table

drawer and began to turn absent-mindedly over the contents. From the heap of letters and loose papers a photograph fell out. He picked it up and looked at it. He tightened his hold on the little square of cardboard. No, it could not be! Not her picture here! Yet there was no mistaking her; the likeness was perfect. She had on the same long coat she wore the first day she appeared in the O'Hagan circus.

What was Kitty Malone's picture doing in Giles' possession?

Dundas was stunned.

"She isn't his sister," he reflected.

A thousand doubts and speculations darted through his mind as he held in his firm clutch the little image of his pupil, Kitty.

Why had she never told him she knew Frank Giles? Why had Giles never mentioned Kitty in his letters? What was this intimacy which both had veiled from Dundas? The questions rose fast one upon the other, stirring within the heart of the clown a tumult of feeling which he had hardly time to suppress as steps were heard approaching by the narrow stairway of the dormitory.

Hastily Dundas threw down the picture of Kitty and covered it over with a book, as though he were guilty and had found out something he had no right to know.

The door opened and Frank Giles entered.

Face to face with Dundas, he was no less agitated than the latter, but after the first formal greeting he tried to conceal his annoyance by asking lightly for Dundas' news.

"How's Baby?" he queried. "As attractive and as obstinate as ever?"

His eyes wandered uneasily around the room as he spoke, taking into account the fact that Dundas must have seen and judged the dusty books and the empty bottles.

Dundas was in no mood for joking. He was excited and he was angry.

"Come," he said to Giles, scarcely returning his greeting, "no nonsense! If any two men on earth can afford

to be square with each other, I guess it's you and I, Frank Giles."

"Square?" Giles lifted his eyebrows as though this insinuated slight were not comprehensible to one of so refined a nature as he. Then, walking over to the mantelpiece where a package of cigarettes lay unopened, he deliberately chose a weed to his liking, and offered at the same time a light to Dundas.

But the clown's reason for distress lay too deep to give him a moment's respite.

"Is this the way you spend your time?" he asked.

Giles had seated himself in a comfortable armchair. He motioned to Dundas to do likewise, and, knocking the ashes of his cigarette carelessly upon the floor, he said:

"How would you expect me to spend my time?"

"With your books!" Dundas cried. "Don't you see what a chance you have to become something? To be somebody if you only get an education?"

In the clown's exclamation there was all the bitterness of regret for his own case. But the younger man saw only the outburst of a somewhat vulgar person who did not in the least grasp the hang of modern things.

He smiled indulgently.

"Why, you don't suppose a man nowadays comes to college to study? What are books compared to men, and life, society, and experience?" Giles made several gestures in the air, as though such ideas as he wished to indicate could not be expressed by words, and then he continued: "Anybody can have books. The thing that college gives a man is social life, contact with his fellow men, a good time—hang it, something besides mere drudgery!"

Exasperated as Dundas was at this sort of argument, and keen as was his regret, the true cause of his irritation lay deep in that part of his heart where the clown was not even a friend, but where he was a man like other men, jealous of what he loved.

However, he was calm as he spoke.

"You don't suppose, Frank, that any

one can achieve anything without drudgery?"

"Oh," the younger man scoffed, "I don't refer to the feats of an acrobat or to the mere training of a 'Baby.' They need, no doubt, some degree of application."

Dundas was outraged. This boy who sat before him owed the very clothes on his back to the clown who had stood by him since the day he came to the O'Hagan circus. Giles would be nothing but a "super" in the troupe, had it not been for Dundas' interest in him and his determination to give him the chance he had lacked himself. Yet one might have supposed the very contrary to be the case.

Face to face with this languid, skeptical, indifferent, insolent—yes, insolent—young good-for-nothing, the benefactor seemed like the protégé, and the protégé seemed like lord and master.

It was not injustice, though, which made the blood boil in Dundas' veins and which caused a flush in his cheeks more crimson than the dye with which he stained his scarlet lips on gala nights. It was not the sense of kindness outraged, nor was it vanity on Jim's part which stirred him more keenly every instant. It was a longing, imperative, insistent, to know how and when Frank had come into the possession of Kitty's photograph, and why Kitty had never spoken of Giles, and what Giles knew and thought of Kitty. All the insinuating demands which jealousy dictates to a lover regarding the woman he adores, haunted the mind of Dundas and impelled him to speak.

Tossing back the book and uncovering with an impulsive gesture the photograph of Miss Malone, he said to Frank:

"Whose picture is this?"

"What picture?" Frank responded indifferently, flipping the gray ashes of his cigarette in the direction of the hearth.

Dundas turned the image so that it faced the most listless of observers.

"Oh, that," said Frank. "That's the photograph of a silly little girl who happens to be fond of me."

The words spoken so carelessly pierced as a knife the heart of Dundas. He could not speak; there was an iron hand that clutched his throat.

But Frank continued, toying with the picture which he had caught from Dundas' hand:

"Yes, a silly little girl who is in love with me, and to whom, if the truth must be told, I am most profoundly indifferent!"

A sigh escaped from Dundas' broad chest. A sigh was it, or a groan, or both, or the smothered cry of a man in pain?

His feelings, succeeding one upon the other so rapidly, were of mingled joy and anguish. He was agonized to think that Kitty—his Kitty—could care for such a man as Giles had proved to be, and at the same time he was relieved, as though a burden had been lifted from him, to know that Frank cared nothing for Kitty.

Skeptical, as we all are where our happiness is concerned, he wanted further to be reassured.

"Come, Frank, old man, tell the truth. She's a mighty good-looking girl. I bet you're in love with her. Own up, now. Men are sometimes shy about confessing they care for a pretty woman."

Frank's answer came with the irony of one who has no heart:

"In love, Dundas? With Kitty Malone? Why, she's only a little village girl. She was good enough as a play-

mate, but you could hardly expect a man of the world to go on caring for a poor little clinging wild rose?"

Dundas, in the indignation which his loyalty to Kitty aroused at these remarks, realized for the first time how indelicate, how coarse his "other favorite" was.

Giles continued:

"She's pretty enough, if you like. Everything's a matter of taste or a question of comparison, in this world. But her beauty only makes things more annoying if you don't happen to care for her." He took several puffs at his cigarette and went on: "She more or less inundated me with letters the first months after I left home. Some of them, by the way, were quite pathetic. She said she wanted to join a circus, in order to get some track of her sweetheart."

Frank's laugh was more odious to Dundas than his irony had been.

Slowly a number of things were becoming clear to the clown; why Kitty Malone had come

into the O'Hagan troupe, and why she had so violently resisted the attentions of Von Hessner. Often he had asked himself these questions. Now he had the answer. She was looking for the man she loved. Kitty Malone was in love.

"Giles!" Dundas groaned. "Don't you know that the thing a man should respect above all else is the heart of the woman who loves him?"



"You think you are boss here, do you?"

Giles gently scoffed at this outburst, made with much vehemence by a clown. "I knew," he smiled, "that you were a first-rate animal trainer. I didn't know what a remarkable Shakespearian jester you could make, on occasion!"

Dundas rose. He took up his hat from the table where an hour ago he had placed it, in a state of mind he could now hardly recall. During a short revolution of the clock's hands, all his hopes, it seemed to the clown, had been struck out, one by one. His friend had failed him, and his hope of being loved. Oh, what hope could Dundas have of being loved?

Bitterly he said:

"There are some people, Frank, who are born to be dupes, others who are born to dupe their friends and their sweethearts."

Frank shrugged his shoulders, finding no response. Then, seeing that Dundas was determined to leave, he followed him to the door, and with much manner he said:

"Stay and have supper with us, won't you?"

"Thank you," Jim answered dryly. "Baby and I are billed for the evening performance. Good night."

CHAPTER IV.

Jim had pictured himself returning to the circus with his hat on the back of his head, his chest thrown out, feeling happy to the tips of his toes.

He had fancied this afternoon would be a telling one in his career; and it had been, but oh, in how different a manner from that he had hoped!

Once having rid himself, by rather brutal measures, of Von Hessner's rivalry, he had been almost fatuous enough to suppose that he stood some chance with Kitty.

In more ways than one he had acted like a clown, he reflected, and the melancholy memories of his interview with Giles kept him wretched company as he found his way back to Baby's stall and began preparation for her evening toilet.

The disappointment at Frank's record

as a college man seemed but the little obstacle which indulgent hands hold low for the aspiring acrobat. Even the fact that Giles could jeer at Kitty Malone left Dundas indifferent. One thing, one thing only mattered; Kitty loved another man.

But the thought of Kitty and of her loving any one called up an image that stirred the clown's finest metal. Kitty appeared to him in the adorable appealing attitude with which she looked toward him when the big white horse grew obstinate; he saw her again as she was the morning she had tapped along the window of his little wagon, timid, hesitating; and he saw her again as she had stood the night before in the ring, flushed, triumphant, lovely, as round after round of applause greeted her. She was his pupil, he argued. He had taught her everything she knew in the circus. What had Giles ever done for her, except give her anxiety and suffering?

"Hang it all!" Jim murmured as he began vigorously to rub down Baby's shining back. "She's not Frank Giles' wife yet, and she won't be until I've said what I've got to say to her!"

As he manipulated the currycomb with an extra vigor that carried the donkey almost off her feet, he heard the discreet and confidential little cough of Miss Smithers. Ever since the incident at the post office she had somewhat avoided the clown. Without stopping in the grooming of his pet, Jim said:

"Well, I suppose you've come to announce your marriage, Miss Smithers?"

The cat tamer never made light of sentimental questions. She blushed at this remark of Dundas.

"Oh," she cried, "it's no time for joking. There's some awfully serious things been happening while you were away to-day."

Her tone was so solemn that Dundas turned to look at her.

"I bet Von Hessner's lions have eaten one of your cats."

This time Miss Smithers' feelings were really hurt. She forgot that she had intended breaking the news gently

to Jim about what had taken place in the circus. Now she called it out to him as though she was one of her own cats trying to scratch him.

"Well, what's happened is that your friend has been put out of the circus!"

"Whose friend? What friend?"

"Miss Malone."

"What, Kitty!"

The currycomb had fallen out of Jim's hand. He clenched his fists, and the color stained his cheek.

"O'Hagan has dared do such a thing!" he muttered.

Miss Smithers drew back a step.

"It wasn't my fault, Mr. Dundas," she protested. "It was Miss Alice who got after her father. She told him Kitty was no good, except to get everybody in the circus excited, and make the men all fight."

But before she had finished Jim had pushed Baby out of the way, vaulted the door of the box stall, and shot like an arrow past the wondering Miss Smithers, who heard him exclaim as he passed that he would make things "hot" for the manager.

"Hot?" the poor little cat tamer repeated. "I guess Miss Alice's got things about as hot's as comfortable." And something like a laugh shook her corkscrew curls.

Jim found O'Hagan over by the fire extinguisher, and he made straight for him with purpose in his eye.

"Goodness!" O'Hagan grunted. "What's happened? Tent on fire?"

Dundas' blood was up.

"How dare you?" He confronted the manager. "How dare you?"

"Dare what?"

"And just the very time I was away, too."

O'Hagan's expression had become lowering. He resented this attack without forewarning.

"Come," he cried, "explain yourself, Jim."

Dundas was in no way assuaged.

"What I have to say is this," he shouted so loud that everybody in the circus could have heard him. "You've acted in a dastardly mean way toward

Miss Malone. You had no business to dismiss her while I wasn't here!"

O'Hagan drew himself up to his full height.

"Dundas," he said, "I'm the boss of this concern, I guess."

"You——"

"I do what I like here, and when I like it. See?"

There was a silence. Dundas looked like a man who is taking slow aim for the bull's-eye before pulling the trigger. He knew the weak spot in O'Hagan's heart, and he let fly for it.

Slowly he said:

"You think you are boss here, do you?"

"Yes sir, I do, and what's more, I mean——"

"Not much you're boss!"

"Dundas!"

"You're!"—Dundas rolled the words under his tongue as though better to relish them—"you're the little pet dog of your daughter; you're the slave to that stuck-up young lady who's so jealous that she can't forgive others for being pretty, and for having success, and being smarter than she is, and for getting all the applause in the ring!"

O'Hagan's ears rang at these words of insult. But before he could collect himself Dundas began again:

"You needn't think I'm the only one who shares such an opinion, either. Everybody in the circus agrees with me. Baby agrees with me. Miss Smithers' cats agree with me. And as we artists don't hanker much about being run by womenfolk, why, I guess we'll follow Miss Malone's example. I know I will, for one. I'll have my trunk packed ready to leave, all right, and not later than this very night."

This said, he turned on his heels without another glance at his victim, and strutted out of the circus, whistling.

The Irish manager had been an actor in his early days. He had played tragedies in which he took the part of the victim, the victim of fate who is torn between two conflicting duties. But he had not supposed that men in real life were confronted with such crises to

traverse. Now he knew all too well the contrary. He felt frustrated, helpless. Who was to boss him, the boss? Alice or the clown?

If he took Kitty Malone back into the troupe again, that meant the end of all domestic peace and the end of his dignity as a director.

If he insisted on sending Kitty away Dundas would leave; that meant the disbanding of the whole troupe, goodbye to the circus—in a word, general ruin.

He sank down in a chair by the fire extinguisher. This was not the first time he had been forced to face difficult situations, but now he seemed unable to pull himself together. While he deliberated between the two fatal alternatives staring at him, he could hear Francis' shrill voice. Francis was always in a hurry to bring any bad news, and the piping cry of the dwarf made O'Hagan wince.

"What next?" he thought, shaking his head.

"Mr. O'Hagan!" Francis tugged at his sleeve to rouse a keener attention.

"Well, what is it?"

"It's this, Mr. Dundas——"

"Never let me hear that name again!" the manager cried, starting up.

"Mr. Dundas," the dwarf persisted, "has gone after a pot of glue and some strips of white paper. He's going to stick the paper over the posters at the door, wherever his name's printed announcing his new act, 'The Leap for Life.' He won't appear to-night!"

O'Hagan leaned down, and shook the tiny man whose face was aglow.

"Francis, that's a lie! Nobody would dare do such a low-down trick as that. No, sir, not while I'm alive," he added under his breath, starting out toward the tent door.

The conversation between Dundas and O'Hagan had been overheard by some of the artists. Already the gossip of Kitty's dismissal and of the clown's protestations had made the rounds of the troupe. Some of them sided with Kitty, some were against her; some blamed Dundas openly, others secretly approved his attitude.

But there was not one among them, giant or dwarf, fat boy or skeleton, groom or artist, who did not in his heart of hearts detest Alice O'Hagan, and who was not of the private opinion that the manager was getting a fairly well-deserved lesson.

Having reached the door, Tim O'Hagan took his cigar out of his mouth and planted himself squarely before the posters.

There was no denying it; Francis had told the truth. In the middle of the second part—the most exciting half of the programme—between the juggler's tricks and the final pantomime, there was stuck a white strip of paper. It covered up, like a bandage over a bad eye, the name of "Dundas in his new Leap for Life."

It was no time for nonsense. Something must be done at once. It was six o'clock already, and the performance was called for eight.

"Things are bad enough as they stand," he murmured. "I guess we won't have any cheating of the public in this circus. Here," he called to one of the grooms, "get me Miss Smithers."

There was not far to go in search, for the cat tamer had been drawn from her wagon at the first sound of voices in discussion, and as stealthily as one of her own four-footed pets she had stolen gently along in the direction of the door where she found herself, as though by accident, in time to study the manager's moves.

"Miss Smithers," O'Hagan said very calmly, "how have the tickets been selling for to-night?"

"Why, Mr. O'Hagan"—she nodded her curls—"I don't see how ever we can seat the people. They've come in from all the country round to see Mr. Dundas' 'Leap for Life.'"

"Well, there isn't going to be any 'Leap for Life,'" O'Hagan blurted out brusquely, "and there isn't going to be any performance. You can go and take your place at the box office near the main gate and stay there till you've given the people back their money, every cent of it, do you understand?"

This startling bit of news had been whispered throughout the circus grounds by the faithful Smithers before O'Hagan had moved a step from his post by the door. He stood with his legs apart, his hands thrust in his pockets, his head bent forward on his chest, gazing at the white strips of paper that glared blankly back at him.

It was in this posture that Dundas ran across him on his way from the stables. The despondent appearance of the manager touched him. There was no denying it. It was a rather serious situation for a manager. Perhaps Jim thought the trying events of his own life that day had added to his indignation unduly. He stopped a moment and called out to O'Hagan:

"Hello, there!"

"You, Dundas?" The manager turned.

"Yes, me again. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"Jim," the Irishman pleaded, "Jim, you're a kind-hearted fellow. You can't go back on a man like this."

"Kindness is one thing," Jim responded, "and justice is another. I don't want to fail you at the last minute this way."

O'Hagan put out his hand to grasp Dundas', but the clown paid no heed.

"You understand," he continued, "just what the conditions are under which I yield?"

"I know your conditions, Jim."

But the clown wished to be explicit.

"Miss Malone," he stated, "is to remain in the troupe, and Von Hessner is to be fired."

"Agreed!" the manager grunted.

Jim, watching the expression of relief that spread over his broad features, had it on the tip of his tongue to say: "And Alice?" But he was generous; he didn't believe it fair game to strike a fellow when he's down; so he simply said:

"Well, then, I'll go and tell Miss Malone that it is your desire——"

"My desire and yours, too," interrupted the manager, holding out his hand and adding: "Put it there, Jim."

"Put it there, old man," Dundas

responded, clasping the hand of the director and the unlighted cigar he held in it.

"All right," he said, turning on his heel. And as he bore no ill will, he added:

"You might light up the ring, if you like—and your Havana."

Jim's ready forgiveness was not altogether so disinterested as it appeared. In his heart of hearts it would have been as keen a disappointment to him as to O'Hagan not to make his "Leap for Life." There had been no rehearsal for this number. Dundas had simply said to the manager:

"Here's what I intend to do."

And O'Hagan, somewhat dazed by such audacity, had answered:

"Will you really dare do that, old man?"

To which the clown responded:

"I guess I'm sure of myself if anybody is."

He might have added "Love makes bold." For the truth was that ever since Kitty's arrival in the circus and the attempted prestige of the lion tamer Jim's soul had been galled by the fact that he was "nothing but a clown."

He knew, as every man does, just how much he was ready to risk for a cause—or a woman—he loved.

This exhibiting himself with a donkey in the guise of a buffoon before Kitty was a source of irritation. From the day he had brought the Austrian to the ground, the upper hand obviously had been his, but he wanted more than this. He wanted to appear, if not a hero, at least plucky in Kitty's eyes.

To be laughed at by the audience, to be greeted with applause from the tiniest hands to the oldest and most feeble, was all very well in its way. Dundas' ambition was to accomplish something remarkable enough so that people would not laugh, but rather hold their breath hanging on his slightest movement. If Kitty were not very unlike other women, her estimation of Jim would catch color from the public's opinion. But it was not vanity that impelled Dundas to this reckless-

ness, it was the longing to please and to win what he loved.

Dundas found Miss Malone in Miss Smithers' little wagon. She had taken refuge there in order to weep undisturbed. The lamp threw its golden rays on the gold of Kitty's hair. Her elbows were placed on the table, her little chin rested on her hands, and she had such charm in her childish sorrow that Dundas paused a moment, standing on the threshold of the wagon, gazing at her. What a joy for him to bring a ray of happiness back into those eyes which now were red with weeping!

As he announced the good news she looked at him with a flash of gratitude so bright it seemed there must be a touch of tenderness in it for Jim. But, in another instant she was shaking her pretty head and had begun again to look despairing.

Dundas was distressed.

"But since O'Hagan wants you to stay, Miss Malone?"

"I can't stay, I must leave!"

"But since your enemies have been turned out?"

"That makes no difference."

"Then," said Dundas, "you must have some reason for going about which I know nothing?"

She looked at him, half timidly, half trustfully.

"Yes," she said, "that's true. I have another reason. And you've been so kind to me, Mr. Dundas, I can't help telling you what it is."

How Jim hoped that her story would not begin as it did.

"There's a man I've cared for all my life—"

Kitty flushed scarlet as she said the words, and it was a moment or two before she could go on:

"I was engaged to this man—or I thought I was—when he left home. I stood it as long as I could and then I started out to try and find him. That's why I'm here. He was going into a circus, and I thought I might get trace of him."

She kept her eyes lowered as she spoke, and between her hands she

twisted back and forth the handkerchief, still damp with her recent tears.

Jim longed to take her in his arms, to cover the little hands with his, to kiss the eyes still heavy with weeping. He longed to cry out that he knew the man she had loved and who was unworthy to touch the tip of her finger.

But Kitty wanted to finish her story. Controlling her emotion, she went on:

"When I had looked in vain here for the one I was seeking, there was no object in my staying with the O'Hagan troupe any longer."

She looked directly at Dundas as she said this, with a faint touch of coquetry which lighted up her tear-stained face like a flash of sunshine after a shower.

"When Mr. Von Hessner offered me the chance to join another circus, I accepted with a faint hope that something might develop in that way. You can just imagine,"—she cried, "what my feelings were when he tried to make love to me! He supposed—Oh, Heaven knows what he supposed or what shame I might have been subjected to if it hadn't been for you, Mr. Dundas."

She put out her hand, and Jim caught it in both of his. A moment only she let it lay there as she added:

"Don't think I'm ungrateful now. Only you see I mustn't stay here."

"But this man"—Jim was slow to speak the words—"this man you say you've always cared for, does he know it? Why doesn't he come for you? Why does he let you search this way?"

Kitty shook her head sadly.

"He's very proud. I suppose he's waiting to succeed at something before he writes me to come and join him."

"Hasn't he written to you?"

"No," Kitty confessed.

Dundas snatched at this little "no" spoken almost in a whisper. If Giles hadn't written she knew nothing of his whereabouts, and above all it was proof sufficient that Frank cared nothing for her.

Again he took her hand between his, bending over it.

"Kitty," he murmured, "you must know I love you. I'm not half as good

as you think me. There's nothing disinterested in me. I've loved you ever since you first set foot in this old tent here. I want you for my own, Kitty. Say you'll give me the chance to win you?"

Her tone was grave:

"Why, but I've just told you that there is another man in my life!"

"Yes, but you didn't say you loved him, not once, you only said you used to care for him."

"I've never loved anybody else."

"But how do you know you couldn't? How do you know that if he were here now you would love him?"

"Oh, yes, yes, I would, I'm sure," Kitty protested.

"But he's not here," the clown argued. "Say that you'll wait till he comes? Say that you will?"

"I can't. I really can't."

"Do it for me," Dundas pleaded; "you said you wished there was something you could do for me."

Kitty's eyes for an instant met Dundas', and he besought her:

"Until he comes, say I can have my chance?"

"There was something adorable in the smile that played about her mouth as she answered:

"Every man has his chance. I suppose you can have yours."

Then she sprang up, but Dundas was by her side. His arm was about her, she was close to him, half yielding as he murmured:

"Kitty, I fear no one. Let him come if he will. You're mine, my own."

And stooping as she raised her eyes in protest, he touched her lips, held her to him, kissed her, his own.

CHAPTER V.

The fated hour arrived at last.

Through a passage which O'Hagan had arranged for them, the crowd was huddled, collecting rapidly, filling the tent, spilling over into the grounds and side shows. The first numbers on the programme, of little importance, and even the old familiar feats held for

the audience to-night that peculiar charm which anticipation creates about all it contemplates. One thing they had come to see, and that was what they waited for with patient indulgence toward whatever prolonged their pleasure through postponement—Dundas' Leap for Life.

What he had planned to do was this: To climb up to the top of the circus tent, where he had built a tiny platform, between two flying trapezes. It was just big enough so that he could stand on it without touching his head against the top of the tent. From this little platform it was that he intended throwing himself downward like a diver, into the net below. He would wait as he fell until he was within three feet of the net, and then, with perfect presence of mind, he would twist himself in such a way as to come down flat on his back, in the very middle of the net. Naturally it was arranged that the net should be properly stretched so as to remain at the same time pliable and secure, so that the worst shock be broken. The most important thing was that Jim should not lose his wind by the swiftness of the fall, for if he reached the net giddy and out of breath, no matter how pliable it might be to receive him, he would break his neck surely.

While they were stretching the carpet for the Pierantoni family to execute their tumbling act, Dundas came through the stables and passed into the exit leading from the ring. He was looking for Kitty. The touch of her lips was fresh upon his own; he dreamed of the golden head as it had lain an instant upon his breast. His arms, it seemed to him, could never feel empty again. Yet he wanted a word from Kitty, one look into her clear eyes before he went in to attempt this leap for which he needed all his courage.

Dundas found her standing at the edge of the hallway, beyond where the grooms had collected in a group. How pale she looked! And how little at ease she appeared! Her beautiful eyes traveled back and forth from the net to

the little platform at the top of the circus.

When Jim spoke to her she started almost as though she were guilty.

"Mr. Dundas," she said, "don't jump to-night if you don't feel up to it, will you?"

Dundas drew her gently toward a quiet end of the passage where they could be alone.

"But you're my mascot," he murmured. "Love flies like a bird through the air. It'll be all due to you if there's any credit given Jim, the clown, to-night."

A faint smile crossed Kitty's face.

"You'll see," Jim repeated, holding out to her his hands.

But Kitty was nervous, greatly agitated. She didn't take Jim's hand.

"I can't see you jump to-night," she said hurriedly. "It's impossible, I—"

"Something's happened!" Jim started. "You take back what you said to-day."

"No, that's not it. Something has happened, but I can't tell you—don't ask me."

"Yes, I will, I must ask you, Kitty. Think what you are doing. In a moment I shall be called. An hour ago you made me the happiest man in the world. Now, like a flash you take everything from me. And you expect me to say nothing!"

"Oh, please don't. It's not my fault," she spoke haltingly.

"There is no question of blame," Dundas said. His tone was tender.

"You know," she faltered, "I told you this afternoon I could not promise anything—that I was not free, that there was another man in my life, and that if he came—"

But Dundas did not let her finish. His mind had worked like lightning while she spoke; he saw it all as clearly as the day: Frank Giles had come over from Williamstown to North Adams; he had seen Kitty during the performance.

"Good God!" he cried.

Kitty put up her hands.

"Hush. We can be heard."

Dundas took no heed of her warn-



"Kitty," Dundas plead, "you can't leave me like this."

ing. He leaned forward as though to snatch the words from her lips as she answered his questions.

"Giles has been here; you've seen him."

She lowered her head in assent.

"But you're not going to see him again."

"Yes."

"Not here? Not to-night?"

"Yes, Jim. I'm going with him. He's waiting for me now up in the village."

"Ah, Kitty!" It was like a sob, this low exclamation from the clown's lips. For a moment he held his arms out to the girl. The memories of that afternoon rose so strong within him, it seemed that she must feel what he felt. Such a love that throbbed in his veins tingling through every fibre of his body—was it powerless to control the one he loved? It could not be.

"Kitty," Dundas pleaded, "you can't leave me like this."

"Dundas"—her tone was firm—"I am going to-night with Giles."

Dundas heard the crash of music that announced his number with a sort of feverish joy. He wished the sound were millions of times louder and that it would deafen him forever to the words he had just heard. The danger, against which he had sought for a word from Kitty to preserve him as a mascot, appealed to him as a measure of deliverance.

The groom signaled to him from the hallway. As he sped past Kitty on his way to the ring, her eyes followed him with the expression of one haunted, the victim of a frightful inward conflict. One moment she stretched out her hand as though to call him back, but again she let it fall inert; something kept ringing in her ears; was it Dundas who had said it as he passed:

"Not the Leap for Life—the Leap for Death, Kitty."

As Dundas entered the ring he was greeted by a burst of applause. Mechanically he bowed, acknowledging the enthusiasm which saluted him. Followed by one of the grooms, he crossed hastily over to the net which was stretched directly under the tiny platform that appeared as a mere speck lodged in the top of the circus tent.

Seeing that he lingered examining attentively the system of cords and pulleys, the groom asked:

"Anything wrong?"

"I loosened the cords myself," Dun-

das answered quickly, "after rehearsal to-day with Miss Malone."

"Then it's all right?"

The clown faced about. There was a mixture of horror and amazement in his eyes. Was Fate then playing so readily into his hands?

"Look here," he said to the groom, "tell me the truth. No one came into the ring after me, did they, to meddle with these ropes?"

The groom's face was broad and red. He looked as loyal as he was dull.

"I was busy fixing the gas all afternoon. I didn't see anybody. But you needn't fear, Mr. Dundas. You're the most popular man in this circus. I guess nobody here would want you to have an accident, that's sure. Who could think of such a thing?"

"Yes!" Jim repeated. "Who, of course?"

And like a flash he glanced toward the entrance of the ring where all the artists stood in a group, waiting with the audience to see Jim do his wonderful act. In the front rank he distinguished a man towering above the rest, his arms crossed on his broad muscular chest. Try as he would, Jim could not meet the eye of Von Hessner. The Austrian, whether deliberately or not he could not tell, kept his head averted.

A smile of irony, irony and reckless indifference, crossed the scarlet lip of the clown.

"Is it all right?" the groom asked.

"I guess so," was Jim's answer, as he seized hold of a cord that hung down from the top of the tent and dragged on the ground in the centre of the ring.

Hand over hand he climbed up, up, up. Without fear of losing his grip, he did not touch his legs to the rope as he went ever higher and higher. The eyes of the spectators followed him, and there was a general smile of approval at the thought of his agility and dexterity. At last he reached one of the flying trapezes upon which as a rule two gymnasts performed their exercises together. But to-night Dundas wanted

to do, not what others had done, but what no one had ever done before.

Hanging from the bar of the first trapeze, he swung forward, touching the other trapeze with the tip of his foot; he set it in motion and then, letting go of the wooden bar and seeming to dart like a bird on the wing, he caught the other swing on the rebound.

There was no question of chance in this act of Jim's. He worked with the rhythm and precision of a clock. The spectators were amazed. Over and over again he began, repeating a dozen times this feat, accelerating each time the speed, and finally, it was not with his hands but with his feet that he caught the flying trapeze. Turning and twisting his body as he flew back and forth he surpassed anything that the audience could imagine. Yet Jim had imagined something bolder and more agile still to dare between the ring and the canvas roof of O'Hagan's old tent.

Swaying now gently, back and forth, on the wooden rod, he paused a moment to recover his breath and to let his heart quiet down. He wanted to be perfectly calm and collected before he made his "Leap for Life." So he lingered until the little trapeze had stopped quite still, high above the murmurs of applause which reached him from below like the roar of the sea.

Meanwhile his mind, it seemed to him, had never been more active. Not even the keen tension of his nerves relieved for a moment the vividness of his suffering. His own skill was greater than he had supposed—too great, he thought bitterly—for his performance was mechanical, his arms worked as by some hidden instinct, while his attention was fixed elsewhere. Fixed upon Kitty and upon Giles. Where were they? Had Kitty left already? Could she go without so much as knowing what Dundas' fate would be?

Once he had got his wind again, he left the trapeze and mounted on the little platform of wood which had been lodged in the very top of the tent.

One moment he stood erect, looking downward into the space beneath him.

The hundreds of upturned faces appeared like so many little white spots. Every thought and feeling was concentrated on him at this moment, he knew, but what did he care for the sympathy of the multitude? All the sympathy in the world could not hold him if Kitty cared nothing.

At this moment everything was silent in the circus. It seemed to Jim that his voice could be heard, as he murmured:

"For the love of Kitty, my own!"

Then without hesitation, like a diver who is about to plunge into the water, he stretched out his hands, lowered his head, and jumped.

Down, down, down he fell, with frightful rapidity. He fell perpendicularly, his arms crossed on his breast; he fell like a meteor.

O'Hagan, satisfied that Jim's act had been crowned with success, that all had gone as it should, lifted his hands and gave the signal for the band to play, when suddenly a cry was heard, piercing, inhuman, a cry of horror coming from a hundred throats at once, as the throng of spectators sprang up in wild confusion.

Half frantic, O'Hagan turned, calling out:

"Jim hasn't missed his aim, has he?"

No, Jim had not missed his aim. At the right moment he gave himself the proper impulse, he came down flat on the back in the middle of the net. But the net had yielded. It swayed under his weight, two of the pulleys came loose, and thus his body was thrown like a sack of meal out on to the ground where it lay, no longer a glorious acrobat, a man with wings, but a limp, immovable mass over which some one had hastily thrown a cloak.

With a distracted gesture, O'Hagan bade the music stop. He rushed out to the stables where they had carried Jim's body ahead of him.

But what did he see?

Who was that other inanimate person they seemed to be lifting, too?

Did Dundas strike some one in falling? No, not exactly, to be literal. But the same blow which sent him

into darkness, had stunned also another heart. It was Jim's little blonde-haired pupil who had fainted away, and they were taking her over to Miss Smithers' wagon while the grooms were sent posthaste as some one cried:

"Quick, here, a doctor for Jim! He's still breathing!"

CHAPTER VI.

Dundas lay between the snowy sheets of his narrow bed in a hospital, whither he had been carried several days after the accident. His injuries were not fatal, and it was he who had insisted that the O'Hagan circus change nothing of its itinerary for him. He could be comfortable on a mattress as they traveled. The manager attributed this obstinate determination on Jim's part to his pluck.

"There's such a thing as having too much nerve," he found himself muttering to the clown, with something very much like a lump in his throat as he saw the ghastly pallor on his friend's face and his utter helplessness.

Little did he suspect how keener than his physical suffering was Jim's inward misery. To have perhaps made a cripple of himself, to have added this burden to those he had been trying to escape—He was too weak to face the future with any close attention. In fact, the only moments of real lucidity had lasted just the time it took to get O'Hagan's word for it that he would not be left at North Adams. The thought of being near Giles, of perhaps having to face him, to congratulate him even, stood before Jim like some nightmare which his feverish brain dreaded with a tenacity that became the refrain of his delirium during the succeeding days.

At the first halt, therefore, where a hospital could be found, Dundas was carried to it, and O'Hagan, after a week's half-hearted work, closed the big tent and gave out notice that there would be no more performances until the clown got well again.

Gradually Jim's forces were coming back to him. After his first good night

the nurse announced that he might receive a visitor.

A touch of the old smile played about the corner of his mouth as he answered:

"I guess, for all the people I know in this place, their visits wouldn't hurt me much."

"There's one lady been here every day," the nurse responded.

"Miss Smithers, I'll be——"

"No, that wasn't the name."

"Young or old?" Jim drew himself up on his arm, scanning the nurse's face.

"Young, very young."

"Not with——" Dundas made a gesture with his hand, which described a sort of halo about his head. "Not with blonde hair?"

"Yes."

"And blue eyes?"

The nurse nodded.

"Her name wasn't Malone, was it?"

"Yes, that's it, Miss Malone. Miss Kitty Malone, I think she said."

The color which had stained Dundas' cheeks with scarlet for a moment fled back, for his heart beat like a triphammer. He sank down on the pillow.

"Has she been here to inquire for me?" he asked, his breath coming quickly.

"Every day."

"Well, if she comes to-day you might tell her I'm 'receiving,'" he smiled faintly. "She was a pupil of mine at the O'Hagan circus."

Dundas could not pursue any thought to a logical conclusion. There was a ringing in his ears like some wonderful song with a glad refrain. It lulled him in his weakness, and he wanted to hear nothing more, to know nothing more than this dream of Kitty, from which he dreaded an awakening.

When later he regained consciousness, after a heavy sleep into which he had fallen, Kitty Malone was sitting by his side. He watched her for some time, with his eyes half-closed, incredulous, drinking in every line of her graceful figure, her golden head bowed over the little hands that lay folded in her lap. He could see that

in her beloved face there were lines of anxiety. Could it be his illness that had traced them there?

Dundas stirred as though in his sleep. He would have taken the fearful leap for life every night just to see once the expression of tenderness in Kitty's eyes as she lifted them toward him.

"Kitty, Kitty," Jim was murmuring inwardly. But aloud he said, opening his eyes at last:

"Is it really you?"

She smiled.

"I thought you'd never wake up!"

"Perhaps it would have been better if I hadn't."

"Oh, why do you say such a thing?"

Her tone was nectar to him, yet he struggled with himself, knowing this was all a dream.

"You haven't come back to stay?" he asked.

"I never went, Jim," she answered shyly.

"Where's——"

"I don't know, and I don't care." She was very grave as she said this.

"But that night——"

"I couldn't leave. There was an awful presentiment in my mind. I didn't know what to do. And then while I was hesitating came that awful sound of the people screaming. Oh!" She hid her face in her hands. "I never shall forget it!"

Jim waited. Once he had been so happy. He dreaded a new despair as the animal that has ever been caught dreads the steel trap. But if Kitty were so moved in speaking of his accident she must care a little.

Perhaps she did care a little. She cared enough to know what Jim was thinking about.

"The only thing I can remember," she said, "on that terrible night after the sound of the people's screaming is that somebody said: 'Jim's killed, sure.' Then everything got black. I tried to push through the crowd. It seemed as though I must get to you. Then I saw them lifting you, and I fainted."

Again she covered her face with her hands.

"Kitty!" Jim held out his arms helplessly toward her.

"Don't think," she went on feverishly, as though she were making a confession, "don't think it took an accident to make me know whether I cared for you. I knew all the time, only it seemed as though my duty were to the man I'd given my promise to so long ago." Suddenly, with a return of her old coquetry, Kitty came an instant within the warm clasp of Jim's arms. Then drawing back, she said: "You'll have to tell him, Jim, that it's you I love, not him."

"I tell him?"

"Yes," she said, shaking her head and laughing. "I know everything now. Miss Smithers told me all about it."

Something very strong in the way of language rose to Jim's lips, but he smiled.

"God bless the poor old dear! She can't help it. She has no other pleasure in life but gossiping. What did she tell you?"

"Everything. About your sending money to Giles and about his being at Williams College."

Kitty's face grew very serious.

"I guess," she said, "there's no one like you in the world, Jim Dundas."

"Then you love me a little, Kitty, do you?"

She nodded her pretty blonde head, and stooping, she rested it for a moment beside Jim's, so that, turning, his lips met hers.

She hid the emotion which sent a flush into her already pink cheeks by hastily beginning again to talk. It seemed to Dundas that he could listen to her forever, and he dreaded the return of the vigilant nurse.

"There's lots to tell you," she began. "So much has happened. O'Hagan's been having inquiries made about the cause of your accident. It seems Francis the dwarf declares he saw Von Hessner hanging round the safety net on the afternoon of that dreadful day. He's been cross-examined by the police, and there's a good chance he may be arrested."



His body was thrown like a sack of meal out on the ground.

Dundas became agitated as Kitty told him this.

"Why don't they leave the man alone?" he exclaimed. "Let him get arrested in some other circus, if he likes. I saw exactly in what condition the net was before I went up. That didn't prevent my jumping."

"Why, then—" Kitty started to speak, but Jim interrupted her:

"Yes, I wanted to die."

"Dundas!" Kitty exclaimed, using his last name as though it could better express the solemnity of what she felt.

"Yes, of course," the man responded, "everything seemed to have failed me at once; there was nothing left."

Again she brought her face close to his. He touched with his lips the treasure that was his.

"Darling," he said, "I was destitute, but I'm richer than a king now. You'll never rob me again, will you?"

But the thought of his destitution brought with it the recollection of Giles and of his obligation to this man. He moved uneasily, digging his shoulders into the pillow. An expression of suffering crossed his brow. It was distressing to Kitty, who rose, fearing that she had stayed too long. But he made her sit down again by his side, close to him, where he could put his hand out over hers, and then he said:

"There's something I must tell you; something that must be done before I have the right to ask you to be my wife." He watched with adoring eyes the pretty flush that mounted to the cheek of his little bride-to-be.

"It's nothing very

bad, is it?" she queried.

And Dundas then told her—making as light as possible of his own generosity—the details that Miss Smithers had not, through ignorance of them, been able to repeat regarding Frank Giles and himself.

Kitty listened, very serious.

Jim had given him his savings, and most of his earnings, save the bare necessities for a year, and now he had been ill, laid up himself for four miserable weeks.

He told her as little as he dared of Giles' attitude, his record in college, his own disappointment. The only stress he laid was upon the tenacity with which he felt himself bound by honor to this obligation. He could not divine how it endeared him further every mo-

ment to his little listener, and his tone was half despairing as he asked:

"Will it be *too* long to wait?"

"I guess love never seems too long," she smiled.

"It'll be three more years?"

"Well, we can work together in the circus. Perhaps we'll have enough before then."

"Kitty, you're the bravest girl in the world. I thought so when you first started to ride with me. Now I know it."

"I'm not brave," she murmured. "Everything seems easy with you, Jim."

"Darling——"

A discreet cough, a rustling of gingham skirts and apron, and Jim knew that his bliss was over. In another second Kitty had been hurried away, and Dundas lay alone with his memories.

CHAPTER VII.

What new event had taken place in the O'Hagan circus?

Things seemed to be running their usual course. That is to say, Dundas' portrait with Baby had once more appeared on the colored posters, and with the recovery of the clown life in the circus for him and for the rest of the troupe had resumed its usual course. The dogs chained up under the little house wagons still continued to bark when a stranger ventured within the sacred precincts. The blue and pink tights still hung their gay rags on the clotheslines, swung across the inclosure between the big tent and the surrounding canvas. In the stables there were the same munching of hay, the same rattling of chains, the same sniffing of horses, the same dull sound of their hoofs upon the straw, the same scraping of halters. Alice, the evil one, continued to work up conspiracies, O'Hagan to light one cigar after another, the fat boy to grow fatter while Miss Smithers grew thinner and her muff became daily more forlorn; Francis the dwarf still flitted about the circus like a swallow around the church steeple, carrying the news. The Pierantonis were, as ever, on the watch, all

eyes and all ears for what might happen next.

Yes, all went on as usual. And yet there was something different in the air, a mystery afloat, a secret whispered about.

In the first place, the manager had for some time been preparing a grand pantomime of which he was supposed himself to be the author. His idea was—with the hope of getting back into Alice's good graces—to assign to his daughter the rôle of heroine. She was to be the star of the performance. But when O'Hagan announced this bit of news to the entire troupe whom he assembled about him, a silence fell, chilling to his prospects. It was broken by the rasping voice of Miss O'Hagan:

"You needn't count on me to play that part, not in this pantomime or any other. You don't suppose I'm going to be paid to act, do you, like a professional!"

Dundas wanted to laugh, but O'Hagan turned about to him as though appealing for help. So the matter, at Jim's suggestion, was put to vote. Kitty was named, as by one voice, and the clown was chosen to act with her in the part of hero.

It was from the time the rehearsals started that the "secret" began to be whispered about the circus.

Madame Pierantoni was emphatic, rather scornful.

"I always told you so," she reiterated. "I knew how it would all end the very first day I saw Miss Malone go into Dundas' wagon. You can't keep much from me."

Miss Smithers—though she said never a word to Kitty—was wreathed in smiles. The end of it all was bound to be a marriage, and who better than she could be maid of honor to this couple?

The whole circus, in fact, had decided that Jim Dundas was to marry Kitty Malone. It was as sure an event for them as the summer tour. Even Baby knew something was up, for she had been terribly neglected since her master had come out of the hospital.

The only two apparently not in the secret were Jim and Kitty.

Like all lovers, their new happiness, it seemed, had dulled their wits. They wandered about in the old O'Hagan tent as though it were an enchanted forest where they remained, invisible to the rest of the world, or themselves—its only inhabitants.

If Kitty were a trifle late Jim waited, uneasy, walking restlessly up and down by the stables with a frown on his anxious brow. And when at last she appeared, fresh and young and radiant, Dundas' expression lighted up as one lamp catches fire from another.

Yet it never occurred to Jim, who was clear-sighted enough in his judgment of others, that if the grooms turned aside when he and Kitty passed it was to hide a smile. And Kitty herself could hardly imagine that the six little Pierantonis spied through the holes of the big tent during lesson hour and shook their heads in a knowing way when the others asked them what they had seen.

To be sure, Dundas was as serious a professor as Kitty was an earnest pupil. Yet the old white horse had never had such long rests between each turn of the ring, or such a chance to get his wind at leisure. And when the lesson was over it was Kitty herself who held out her hands for her professor to steady her as she jumped.

Ah, but how soft Dundas found the touch of these little hands! Each time they rested in his, he recalled his illness at the hospital, the long hours of semi-unconsciousness, when the wonderful freshness of these hands had calmed him, restored him, cooling his brow with their delicate touch, these little hands of Kitty Malone!

After the pantomime rehearsals began Kitty and Jim had a thousand natural pretexts for being together.

What could they be waiting for?

Even O'Hagan asked himself this question.

Only Kitty and Jim knew the responsibility which kept them from marrying. There was between them, and would be for three long years, another

person. No worthlessness on the part of this other person could make Jim shirk the obligation he had assumed to see a man through college. And when the longing to be with Kitty, to make her his own, got the better of him, it was his little pupil herself who reasoned with him for the right course to take.

"Jim," she said, slipping her hand in his with a touch of coquetry, "Frank Giles still keeps us from marrying, but not in the way you once thought he would."

She laughed, watching the lines soften in Jim's eager face.

"It's true, then," he asked, bending over her, "that you'll wait for me, Kitty?"

"Wait for you? Haven't I waited all this time without knowing it. What are three years?"

"Nothing for love," Dundas murmured, placing his arm about her. "And you love me, don't you, Kitty?"

"Yes."

"Tell me again."

She lifted her face toward Dundas, who took his answer from her lips as they met his own.

And so indeed they might have waited three long years had it not been for an especial providence that watches over lovers.

When at last the great opening night arrived, the tent was packed with spectators. The programme was played successfully to the end, the pantomime was announced, the screens which hid the stage temporarily from view were thrown back, and there was disclosed to the eyes of the audience a little wooden house such as those the pioneers built on the prairies. Dundas, disguised as a trapper, came in from the direction of the stables. Once before the house he fired off his pistol in the air, when immediately from the cabin a young girl descended, radiantly beautiful and dressed in a hunting costume. It was Kitty. Dundas, without speaking of course but by eloquent gestures, made her understand that the Indians of the region were in an upris-

ing, that the whole region was threatened, and that he had come posthaste to act as rescuer.

This, or something like it, was what the audience were supposed to understand; this, or something like it, or something very different, it mattered little. What they really understood was the love of the trapper for this young girl to whom in reality he had come to offer his heart.

He was wonderfully eloquent in expressing himself without words, and the girl seemed marvelously happy.

The whole scene was so gracefully played that, as far as the audience were concerned, Dundas and Kitty might have prolonged it indefinitely, had not their tacit love-making been interrupted in the play by the sudden arrival of the post carrier, no other than Francis the dwarf, mounted on his tiny brown and white pony. By the pace at which he dashed upon the scene it became evident he was the bearer of important news.

Dundas, the trapper, was supposed to seize the letters from his hands, tear open the envelopes, and to read some message with regard to the Indian uprising, something terrible, which he was to show the girl beside him and which was to make them both wring their hands and implore the heavens.

But it happened that at the moment when Francis was ready to rush in upon the stage, O'Hagan could not find the letter bag, so he thrust into the dwarf's little hand a copy of the latest edition of the evening paper.

It was this which Jim seized from the carrier and, playing his part to perfection, he unfolded it, looked it through, when suddenly—The whole tent rang with applause. No one ever saw such acting! Jim had turned pale, his hands shook, his emotion was not feigned but only too real as he held out the paper to Kitty.

She looked at it—and again there was a burst of applause, this time in her honor. She, too, had grown ghastly pale, and in her eyes true tears sparkled under the circus lights. What she read was not the announcement of an In-

dian raid, but this heading which made her tremble like a leaf, from head to foot:

A GREAT COLLEGE SCANDAL.

Frank Giles, one of the juniors at Williams College, has given the world a surprise by marrying the proprietress of the restaurant in North Adams. It seems he was enormously in debt to her. She is a pretty woman ten years older than Giles, but with a neat fortune of her own. The students are indignant and have openly protested.

The momentary effect of this surprise, like that of all surprises, was to stop short the conventional course of events. But the trapper and his lady-love could not remain indefinitely with their hands clasped, their eyes uplifted, aghast.

Dundas whispered to Kitty:

"Frank Giles!"

And as though the mere utterance of this name dispelled all the obstacles which had so long stood between them and kept them one from the other, Dundas whispered again:

"He doesn't need me any more."

"And I?" answered Kitty.

"You, Kitty?"

"Yes, Jim, I need you."

It was not the heroine of O'Hagan's pantomime who, after a moment's hesitation which only quickened the excitement of the audience, threw herself into the arms of the trapper. It was Kitty Malone who longed to feel Jim Dundas' strong embrace as she laid her head so close upon his breast that she could hear the rapid beating of his heart in unison with her own.

And now the Indians might come bounding upon the stage, making such war cries as to terrify the entire circus and start the watchdogs to yelping. They might scalp Miss Smithers, and prepare to roast the fat boy, for all Jim and Kitty could care or hear.

Was it a cloud that carried them?

No, it was the white horse, without saddle and without bridle, upon which Dundas had sprung, lifting his beloved to his side.

Gallop on, old horse! Gallop until you have lost your wind! You had

chance enough to rest when these two were rehearsing. Now their fate is in your keeping. You must rescue them from every ill that would pursue them, all the jealousy, all the treachery, all the meanness, which have been for months close upon their heels. To-day they are betrothed, to-morrow they will be married. Gallop! Gallop, old white horse; to-morrow is their wedding day! Carry them as you turn about the ring, in the whirl of movement that bewilders them less than their own great happiness.

Jim felt an audacity that was new to him. With a single leap he sprang up-right on the old horse's back.

Seizing Kitty's hands, he said to her: "Mount beside me. I've got hold of you. Don't be frightened!"

"Frightened, Jim," she whispered, "when you are holding me?"

She did as he told her; she sprang up, standing lightly upon the strong thigh of the clown. And now the audience saw her, above the horseman, in the air, her arms lifted gracefully

above her head, one foot raised behind her as though the tiny ankle kept her balanced in this difficult poise, like a bird in flight.

There was a double round of applause from the crowd, who cheered until the old tent fairly trembled.

The white horse galloped as though he were a colt again. Jim felt there was no end to what he could do. Kitty was enraptured. She closed her eyes, murmuring:

"Oh, Jim, my Jim! I'm yours forever. Hold fast to me so that I won't fly away! so that I won't fall! My life is yours to keep, Jim darling."

Keeping fast hold of her meanwhile, he lifted his eyes toward her. He was smiling, and she saw how pale he looked, how happy.

As though an April zephyr were aiding in its flight a butterfly, it seemed to Kitty she was being carried, wafted while she listened to the refrain on Jim's lips. Over and over again he murmured to her:

"Kitty, my own!"



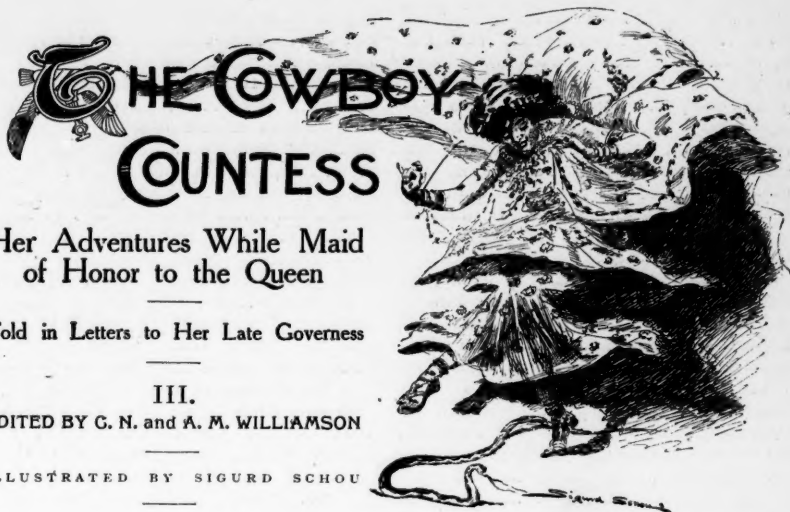
THE MESSAGE OF THE LEAF

TO-DAY I found the first green leaf
And smiled to think of all it meant;
The winter gone with care and grief
And discontent.

And smiled to think of April skies,
Of fragrances too sweet for words,
Of wind-swayed nests and lullabies
Of happy birds.

And smiled because my heart said low—
The first leaf opened wide to hear—
It might bring spring or winter, so
It brought you, dear!

ALICE E. ALLEN.



Her Adventures While Maid of Honor to the Queen

Told in Letters to Her Late Governess

III.

EDITED BY G. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

CARMONCEUX CASTLE,
Friday.

DEAREST MADEMOISELLE:
To-morrow our visit to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex will come to an end, but I can't wait till it's over to write you.

I am sure you will have read about the visit, as you say you are taking in a New York Sunday paper, on purpose to get all the English "Society News," with bits about me sprinkled in here and there. But the newspapers, even the most sensational ones, can't have got hold of the real story. Only a few people in the house knew what was happening, and those who did won't tell, for, you see, I don't call writing to you "telling." You are thousands of miles away, and you will never breathe a word to a human soul, I am as certain as if you were myself—unless, of course, any garbled version of the truth *should* begin to go the rounds. Then you are at liberty to give the real story.

Other things I've written you have had to do mostly with myself or my intimate friends; but this is different, and has to do with a king and queen. Not my king and queen, however, otherwise

I should have to be "mum," even with you.

I can guess what you must have read in your Sunday paper. That the King and Queen of England, with Queen Maud of Norway, and the King and Queen of Spain were all going together to visit the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, at their wonderful old castle, one of the most celebrated as well as among the most ancient in Great Britain. I dare say the journalists didn't forget to mention that Queen Maud's little boy and the eldest Spanish baby would be with their mothers; and I'm sure they didn't neglect a description of the entertainments to be provided for their majesties by the most famous non-royal host and hostess in England. You see, within the memory of man, so many royalties have never been collected together for a visit in a country house, so this affair will be famous; and all the more reason why the thing that happened night before last should remain a kind of state secret.

I don't doubt that your Sunday paper had some such heading for its royal visit article as: "Three Queens in a Castle," or "A Royal Flush"; and I suppose every guest was not only la-

beled, but accompanied by a kind of *dossier*. Still, it isn't likely that the name of Mr. Henry Drummond made much impression upon you, because you're not particularly interested in persons of his profession. Well, just remember that name now, dear, for I'm coming to it again presently, and it's of a good deal of importance in my story. But, first, I think I'll describe the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, and Carmonceux Castle.

The duke has been a very great figure in politics for many years, and is the richest duke in England; tall and rather sad-looking, with thick gray hair on a nobly shaped head, a patriarchal beard, and a moody manner. I don't know how many splendid houses he has, but, anyhow, there's one in town, a regular palace, and enormous estates in Scotland, besides Carmonceux, which is older and more famous than any of the others, and is so full of art treasures and other marvelous things that kings are said to envy the duke.

The duchess, I suppose you know, is half American—her mother "hailed" from New York, I believe, and married a Roman prince—and the Duchess of Sussex has quite a "fad" for Americans, to whom she's often very kind, even when she doesn't know much about their pasts, if she happens to take one of her fancies. I've heard that she herself has never been to America, and knows very little about it, really, except such bits of information as come floating across the big pond. But she is so amusing, and generous, and good-natured, as well as tremendously "smart," that the world and his wife are generally nice to even the queerest of her pets.

Now for Carmonceux Castle; but as I'll enclose two or three snap shots—which I've developed myself in a dark room that was once a secret cell for a prisoner, and is said to be haunted—I needn't say much about it. Part is as old as the Conquest, but the part which the family actually lives in was only built in thirteen hundred and something. The whole great pile is a sort of fortress castle, because, of course,

it was originally built to stand a siege; but the moat is choked up with water-lilies now, pink and blue and white ones; and the aggressive-looking old towers which swell out from walls and gateway are curtained with ivy. There is a cloistered court; and the great stone hall, and the oak-paneled dining-hall, as well as the picture-gallery, are called the finest of their kind in England. It's a current joke that the family itself doesn't know how many stairways there are in the castle, and that a hundred years ago a relation, hated by the reigning duke, lived with his wife and several children and servants in the house for some years without the owners or *their* servants being any the wiser. So now you can see that Carmonceux is one of the great places where two kings and three queens, with their various retinues, can be entertained grandly without crowding.

I think the dear queen brought me partly to please the duchess, because of my coming from America, and the "romance" of my life—as the newspapers put it—in which people are interested. Anyway, I was delighted to come. And you've no idea how pretty the Queen of Spain is, and Queen Maud is adorable. The King of Spain is so witty that he can keep everybody laughing by the hour, if he cares to take the trouble. You know what *our* king and queen are; so, altogether, you can imagine that the Carmonceux visit bade fair to be a great success.

Among the lesser fry, like me, and the guests—a list of whom, as proposed, had, of course, been submitted to the royalties for approval and suggestion—was Mr. Henry Drummond.

I'd never met him until the day we arrived at Carmonceux Castle—five days ago now—but I'd heard him spoken of at least a dozen times within the week before coming here. He appeared to have an unusual sort of position, because, though he was a public entertainer, he was also "in society"; so much "in," that this wouldn't be his first experience as a guest invited to meet royalty. You may notice that I

speak of these things about Mr. Drummond in the *past* tense; but you'll see why presently. I understood that he was an American by birth, who had been educated abroad, and spent most of his life since in the most important capitals of Europe, entertaining royalty in particular and the aristocracy in general with his startlingly clever exhibitions of thought-reading. Every one said he was the most extraordinary genius in that line "since Stuart Cumberland"; and though I didn't quite know who S. C. was, as it seemed he

was a blazing luminary before my time, I was quite longing to see Mr. Henry Drummond.

Well, I hadn't been very long at Carmonceux before I not only saw but met him. It was at tea-time in the great hall—the most wonderful place, all tapestries, and armor, and portraits by old masters, palms, flowers, and "comfy" sofas with lots of cushions—and as the royalties particularly wished the house-party to be as informal as possible, it was assembled there together. I believe Mr. Drummond rather wanted to



I didn't say a word, but that was because I was thinking hard—so hard that my blood had rushed up to my head, and my ears were tingling as if they'd been pinched.

meet me. Anyhow, the duchess brought him up, and with one of her charming smiles, said that we were "all three, more or less, compatriots."

Then Mr. Drummond got me tea, and cucumber sandwiches and things, and I had time to take stock of him.

He didn't strike me at first sight as at all the sort of person one would expect a professional thought-reader to be. You'd fancy such a man would be rather dreamy and mysterious in appearance, wouldn't you? But Mr. Drummond was just the opposite of that. I thought his clean-shaven chin and jaw almost brutal in their shape, and his nostrils of that high-cut shape which is supposed to mean cruelty or unscrupulousness. But his face was *most* interesting, with a very fine forehead, and *compelling* sort of eyes—brilliant blue, with thick ink-black lashes, and hair as smooth and dark as ebony. His mouth was quite fascinating, too, because he had a frank, unexpected smile that showed beautiful strong teeth; and his figure and his hands were noticeably good. I said to myself, after he had talked to me for a while in a very pleasant, low voice—not a bit American—that his power as a thought-reader must lie in his eyes; for, really, they were the sort you felt you *dared* not look straight into long, unless you wanted to do or think whatever he might wish you to.

He told me interesting things about the countries he had seen—queer, original things, not like most people would tell—and was just giving me an amusing anecdote of a visit he had paid lately to Madrid, when he "performed"—if one can call it that—before the Spanish royal family, when the duchess came to us again, with a beautiful little book in her hand, bound in white velum, and jeweled.

"This is a new toy of mine," she said. "A friend who does exquisite bookbinding made this cover for me, and sent the book to be in time for my house-party. The two kings and the three queens have christened it. I wonder how much I could get for it, if I cared to sell? But no money would

buy it. Now, I want to add you both to my collection."

I supposed it was an ordinary visitors' book, though it could have been only a miniature one, as it wasn't more than six or seven inches in length, and four or five inches wide. But when Mr. Drummond and I had both examined the enchantingly pretty cover, I opened to the first page, and saw two thumb-marks, in ink, with the lines fine and clear as thin black lace. One had the signature "Edward" underneath, and the other "Alexandra."

"Why, it's a 'thumbograph' book!" I exclaimed, showing the page to Mr. Drummond.

I thought that he would be very much interested, but a curious look came over his face; the kind of look we mean when we say "his face fell." The queer expression was gone in half a second, as completely as if it had been wiped off. He smiled politely, and made nice remarks as he turned over the pages, seeing Queen Maud's, and the King and Queen of Spain's thumb-marks and signatures following after the English royalties. There were a number of others, too—in fact, almost all the members of the house-party; and now, said the duchess, it was our turn. A perfectly beautiful young Irishman, who is in the Guards, a godson of the king and queen's, was dancing attendance on the duchess, with a tray containing the moistened black ink-block in a tiny box, and a gold bowl of water for us to dip our thumbs in after we had "made our mark." This would have been far too great a privilege for a servant, and Captain O'Malley—he's an "honorable," too—seemed very well pleased to have it.

I laid my thumb on the black stuff, and was just going to dab it on a blank page of the book, when the duchess stopped me, saying I had picked up too much ink, and the impression would be blurred. I had to wash my thumb and try again before she was satisfied; but the mark was perfect, and I was quite pleased with it. When I had signed, I passed on the book to Mr. Drummond.

He took it, and pressed his thumb

much more heavily on the ink block than I had. Then he seemed in the greatest hurry to stamp it on the page, but the duchess was too quick for him. He had to do it again, and still again, before she would let him touch the paper. It was on the tip of my tongue to say we would almost think he didn't want us to know what his thumb was really like in private life, but I saw it would be impertinent, and stopped short.

In spite of all the pains the duchess had made him take, Mr. Drummond's mark didn't come nearly as well as mine, and if he hadn't had such a peculiarly lined thumb, it would have been quite indistinct. As it was, though shadowy, there was an extraordinary impression on the paper, like a tiny ace of clubs, or a clover-leaf, in the very middle of the thumb-ball, and a wavy tracery of lines all round it, rather like an elaborate frame for the center mark.

Both the duchess and Captain O'Malley exclaimed at it, and said they had never seen anything so interesting in the way of a thumb-impression. I didn't say a word, but that was because I was thinking hard—so hard that my blood had rushed up to my head, and my ears were tingling as if they'd been pinched.

Now, dear, does your memory serve you well enough to help you guess what made my ears burn?

You must remember the time when dad brought home that celebrated detective, Mr. Pinkerton, to dinner at the ranch? Of course, he was always bringing people, so we were never really surprised, and I don't suppose our faces would have changed if dad had appeared arm in arm with a Mikado about ten minutes before dinner. But you had never met a detective before, and don't you remember how I laughed at you afterward for not knowing what kind of things to say to him? He was one of the most interesting of dad's sudden importations, and we were all hanging on his words before dinner was over. I rather think it was in the "living-room" afterward, and you had gone out to see to something or other

when he showed up his collection of criminals' thumb-marks. He hadn't very many, but he seemed proud of those he had, for the criminals were all the greatest celebrities, each one with a hair-stand-on-end story attached; and Mr. Pinkerton valued them as women value their pearls.

I quite recall telling you some of the stories afterward in my room, and you said I mustn't dream of them. Well, the thumb-print he liked best, the one with the most exciting though not the worst story, was exactly like the mark Mr. Henry Drummond made in the duchess' book. Now, do you wonder my ears tingled?

Maybe, if his face hadn't fallen when he saw the thumbograph book, and if he hadn't been so awkward about dabbing on the ink, I shouldn't have thought as much of the coincidence. But, as it was, it made me feel almost *creepy*.

I didn't say anything, as I told you, and the book continued its round. Immediately Mr. Drummond took up the subject he had dropped, as if we had never been interrupted, and he was just as entertaining as ever; but I couldn't concentrate my attention on the talk any more. I was wondering what I ought to do, or whether I ought to do anything at all.

You see, I couldn't be sure, after these years, that the mark Mr. Drummond's thumb had first made was precisely the same as that of Mr. Pinkerton's most interesting criminal. But the resemblance was so startling that I was frightened, and felt the most awful sense of responsibility—responsibility toward the royalties, and all the other important people assembled in this house, lest harm should come to them which I might prevent if I told what I half suspected; and responsibility toward Mr. Drummond, on whom it would be terribly cruel and unjust to bring suspicion if he were an innocent man, and the likeness in the two impressions a mere coincidence, not even as marked as my imagination made it seem, perhaps.

I cannot remember, even now, all the

details of the story Mr. Pinkerton told, for it must be four or five years since he told it. But the man of the thumb-mark was a most mysterious and exciting person, a gentleman by birth, who had "gone wrong" when he was only sixteen or seventeen. From that time he had brought off the most astounding "coups" in the way of burglaries, thefts of jewels, and so on, several of which he had accomplished by turning actor, and stealing the "star's" diamonds or pearls. He had been a clever actor, too, and, according to Mr. Pinkerton, there was scarcely a line in which he wouldn't have been clever if he'd chosen to take it up. Only once was he caught, and then he was accused of such a small theft that he couldn't be kept in prison for long. It was at that time his thumb-mark had been taken by the police; and Mr. Pinkerton had, somehow, got the original—leaving a copy—because it was through him the famous "Gentleman Dave," as he was called, had been "copped." His own word, not mine—so don't be shocked!

The last act of Gentleman Dave's short but brilliant drama consisted of a dynamite plot in Washington, which he'd been bribed with some enormous sum by a society of anarchists to carry out. It was only a partial success, and no one was killed but Gentleman Dave himself, who was supposed to have been "hoist with his own petard." Bits of a coat with a tailor's name at the

collar were found, and it was proved that the coat had been bought by Gentleman Dave; still, Mr. Pinkerton said to dad and me, in telling the story, that he had never been quite sure that the fellow was "good and dead." At the last moment he might have hired a "catpaw," and taken means to make it appear, if anything went wrong, that he himself had been killed, thus open-

ing a door through which to vanish forever—the door of death through which some one else had passed.

When Mr. Pinkerton dined with us that night, Gentleman Dave's supposed death had happened six or seven years before; so now it would be at least eleven years ago. And as nothing had ever been heard of him anywhere, apparently, since the affair in Washington, one might really believe that he had died, in spite of the detective's shrewd suspicions. Still, here was Mr. Drummond, known all over Europe as the most extraordinary living thought-reader. He



It was rather like the old game of "follow my leader."

had been a celebrity for eight or nine years, I heard from several people, and there were various stories about the beginning of his fame, each one quite different from the other, but every one seemed to agree that his first great successes had been made in the East, and the Sultan of Turkey had apparently been his first royal patron. There was nothing in these vague accounts of Mr. Henry Drummond's career to prove that he couldn't possibly

have begun life as Gentleman Dave, and yet the idea of the two men being, in reality, one and the same seemed so far-fetched, so wild, so almost ridiculous, that when I'd turned it carefully over in my mind for a few minutes, I decided that I must act as if it had never come into my head. If I started a scandal about a guest of the duke and duchess, in such a house-party as they had assembled, and there turned out to be nothing in it—as almost surely would happen—I should be disgraced forever, and the queen would have a right to be dreadfully annoyed with her maid of honor. Every one would be nervous at the suggestion that there might be a disguised criminal in the house, plotting to blow up the party or steal their jewels, and I should be to blame for spoiling the royal visit.

You must admit, dear, that the situation wasn't very simple?

Well, I took my own advice, since I dared not ask for any other, and everything went on beautifully. As they say on the other side, there was "something doing" every moment; splendid shooting for the men, most of whom are crack shots, of course; the finest Hungarian band in the world to play entrancing music in the minstrels' gallery during dinner; the most popular new comedy in town, with all the London company and scenery, down to give an entertainment in the big theater the first night; the "Follies" for the second night—*such* clever people, in an entertainment they've invented—and for the third, Madame Narasate, the extraordinary new contralto, to sing. You must have read about her, though she hasn't been to America yet, for she made such a sensation this summer at Covent Garden. She is Spanish, and nothing like her voice has been heard for years.

As for Mr. Drummond, he wasn't "booked" for any regular entertainment, but he gave several exhibitions of his powers in the afternoons, after tea, when the "shooters" had come in, and were feeling too lazy and comfortable even to play bridge. Several of the royalties tested his talents, among others

the pretty Queen of Spain. She had to think of something, you know, and Mr. Drummond had to find it, though blindfolded. She thought of a suit of armor that had belonged to Oliver Cromwell, and he went straight to it, which impressed her very much. Then Mr. Drummond suggested another kind of experiment, subject to her pleasure. *He* was to think of something, and she was to find it, under the hypnotic influence of his will, communicated not through a touch of the hand, but merely through a long gold ribbon which was to be passed round her waist, and he was to hold the ends.

Everybody was interested in this, you may be sure, and when she had started off, quite briskly, after thinking hard for a moment, with the ribbon ends in Mr. Drummond's hands, the whole company trailed after the two, at a distance. It was rather like the old game of "follow my leader," only we were as quiet as mice, not to disturb the "principals." The queen hesitated a little now and then, at the beginnings of corridors, or at the foot of a stairway, but at last she seemed more certain, and eventually opened the door of the room used as the day-nursery of the prince, her little son. He was out of doors with one of his nurses, but "traces of occupation" were there in plenty, as they say of deserted camps, and Queen Victoria went to a rocking-horse which stood in a corner. She touched it, and gave a sigh of relief.

"Is that what you willed the queen to touch?" asked the King of Spain, much amused, and showing the delightful dimples that make him tremendously attractive when he smiles.

"It is, sir," said Mr. Drummond. "I happened to see that rocking-horse when it arrived, and heard that it was to be a present from the duke."

Heaps of other queer things he did, which puzzled the house-party in the way people love to be puzzled; but that's the only one I'll mention, because, in a way, it had a bearing upon what happened afterward.

It was on the second day of the visit that a telegram came which upset the

poor duchess horribly. It was from Madame Narasate, to say, with a "million regrets," that she couldn't possibly come and sing as arranged, because she had caught a chill and temporarily lost her voice.

The wire arrived in the morning, when the royal men and most of the others were shooting and the royal ladies were getting ready to walk out and join them for luncheon. Mr. Drummond, not being a "shooter," was in the big hall, where the wire was delivered to the duchess, and I was there, too, so I heard what followed.

The duchess showed the message to Mr. Drummond, and said: "What shall I do?"

"How would you like to have Lolita come and dance instead?" he asked.

The duchess stared as if she thought he were joking, because Lolita is the gorgeous Spanish dancer who was imported this season as a rival to Maud Allan at another big music-hall, and who thinks more of herself as a being of importance than most princesses do.

"We couldn't possibly get her at such short notice," the duchess objected, "unless it were a royal command, and I don't think the king would care to make it that. He is so considerate of the people always, and the advance bookings to see Lolita dance must be so huge that her being out of the bill would mean a frightful money loss to the engagement. Of course, we could offer compensation for that, but they mightn't like to accept, as it would be to give pleasure to the king and queen."

"I could get her to come," said Mr. Drummond quietly. "You know, I spent some time in Spain, and it was partly through me that Lolita has this engagement in London, which has brought her the success of her life. I spoke to Foss, the manager of the Imperial, and recommended her to him, so she's rather grateful to me. The question is, would you like her to dance here?"

The duchess exclaimed that she would be *too* pleased, if it were really possible without upsetting too many people's plans; and Mr. Drummond

said the only change that need be made was for Lolita's dance at the Imperial to come on at nine instead of late in the program, as usual. Then the instant she had finished she could dash into a motor-car, and spin out in a little more than an hour to Carmonceux Castle.

The duchess was ecstatic, and called Mr. Drummond an angel. "Lolita could just wrap a cloak round her, and be all ready to dance again here," she said.

But to this Mr. Drummond objected. "I think she'd want to change, because, unless I'm much mistaken, she'd like to give her *new* dance, which she has never done yet except in Egypt before the Khedive. She's been saving it up for next season, I happen to know, as a novelty, and the papers are to talk in advance. So it would be much more piquant to do that here, for the first time. It's supposed to be Cleopatra dancing before Caesar. Not that she ever did, but that's a detail, and it's very audacious, but not improper."

The duchess was more than ever enchanted with this proposal—so enchanted that she was quite resigned to Madame Narasate's failure. Mr. Drummond said that he must go to town at once to see Lolita, and the duchess gave orders to the groom of the chambers that a chauffeur should get ready the fastest car in the garage. "Tell your fascinating friend we can send the Platon for her, with pleasure," she went on to Mr. Drummond; but he, with due politeness, declined the kind offer in Lolita's name. He happened to know that she was quite foolishly terrified to motor with any other chauffeur and in any other car than her own. She had a fine Clunière, said he, built especially for her, big enough to stuff in two maids and a dress-basket without crowding.

So that was satisfactorily settled. Mr. Drummond was whisked off to London in a splendid car with the ducal coronet on the panels, and later a wire came saying:

All well; you may expect her with confidence.

Then the duchess told everybody, and the whole house-party was looking forward with the greatest excitement to seeing Lolita do her new and "audacious" dance, never yet beheld by European eyes.

Mr. Drummond was back before evening, and the Follies appeared, and were perfectly fascinating. Then came the next day; and now I have brought you to the evening before last—the exciting Lolita evening.

Dinner is at nine at Carmonceux, and next to a state dinner at Buckingham Palace or Windsor, I should think there could be nothing finer. Magnificent gold plate, historic china which was made for Louis XIV., linen that might have been spun by fairies, and flowers which suggest a grand theft from Eden. Really, that's not too enthusiastic a description; and the livery of the Sussex servants is extraordinarily striking and picturesque.

The royalties dislike long dinners, and so, though everything here is done on such a magnificent scale, the act of dining takes only an hour and a half. As soon as dinner was over, Mr. Drummond excused himself, to be ready to meet Lolita at the gates when she should drive up in her motor-car. There was to be a little preliminary entertainment, which would have taken place before Madame Narasate's song, in case she had appeared. It was a short amateur play, written by a cousin of the duke's, and acted by the duchess and Captain O'Malley. The whole performance would occupy only about



When she had started off, with the ribbon ends in Mr. Drummond's hands, the whole company trailed after the two.

twenty-five minutes, though it was in two acts, and the curtain had to go down between the two.

As it fell, the queen gave me a look, and, seeing that she wanted me for something, I went at once to find out what I could do. She had dropped a bracelet, it seemed, one of which she was fond, as it was given to her by her sister, the Dowager Czarina of Russia. Would I go and tell her maids to look, and ask the servants of the house to search for it as soon as possible lest it be stepped on and crushed?

I flew out of the theater, and in the great hall had the excitement of seeing Lolita arrive, ushered in by Mr. Drummond. The door through which I came was quite close to the two, so I had a good look at her. She was hurriedly unwinding the veil that covered her

hair, and listening so attentively to something Mr. Drummond was saying that she didn't see me at first.

You know, dear, how I picked up a few words of Spanish from that Mexican "cow-puncher" dad took on at the ranch because he was sorry for him, so far from home? You used to scold me for talking to the boy—but he knew such nice stories. Well, if it hadn't been for tall Joachim, I wouldn't have understood Mr. Drummond when he said: "Are you sure it's big enough?" or Lolita when she answered: "Do not take me for a fool, my dear man."

Even as it was, I didn't make much out of the words. With just a glance at Lolita's brilliant young face, which she turned when she caught sight of me, I darted on, and, to my joy, learned that the queen's bracelet had been found on the stairs. I had the pleasure of giving it back to her, and being rewarded with a smile for which I do believe I'd hold my hand over a hot fire.

Well, the little play was soon ended, and then came Lolita's dance. There was quite a stir in the theater, even among the royalties, when she floated onto the stage, in her Cleopatra dress, blazing with jewels, and shimmering all pink and pearly through gauzy silks. The dance was rather thrilling, and Lolita had several encores, but at last the clapping hands had mercy on her. The curtain was allowed to fall; she was called to pay her respects to the royalties, and I don't doubt that she received some beautiful jewels as souvenirs of the occasion on which she had so kindly "obliged." I know she was asked to have supper, but respectfully excused herself on the plea that she had a sick mother at home, about whom she was rather anxious. So she was allowed to go, and several young men of the house-party watched her departure in the fine motor of which Mr. Drummond had spoken. Afterward, Captain O'Malley—who, I may as well confess to you, dear, has fallen a tiny bit in love with your Peggy!—told me that Lolita had a dress-basket big enough to hold a dozen Cleopatra costumes and still leave room to spare.

While the Green Hungarians were playing in the great hall, where the party assembled after Lolita had gone, the groom of the chambers came to murmur something to the duchess. I saw that there was a group of figures assembled on the landing of the grand staircase. Something seemed to be happening. Somebody seemed to be preventing some one else from making some demonstration.

When the duchess had listened to the man, she turned pale as a ghost, hesitated a minute, and then went straight to the King and Queen of Spain. By this time every one knew that something unusual was in the air. Queen Victoria gave a faint cry, the king soothed her, and they hurried away upstairs.

Exactly what came next I can't remember, it was all so confused; but I think the duke and duchess talked together and consulted our own king and queen. Anyhow, *we* soon knew what was the trouble—and you can imagine nothing more awful.

The little Spanish prince had disappeared out of his crib while his nurse was sleeping in the same room. She had waked to find him gone.

"It's a case of kidnaping," was whispered round; and even as Mr. Drummond was offering clever suggestions about telephoning Scotland Yard, the most bewildering idea came into my head.

Captain O'Malley was near me. Without stopping to think, I called him, and there and then told him all about Mr. Henry Drummond and the thumb-mark.

"But he can't have kidnaped the baby, as he's here," said that charming young Irish soldier.

"No; but supposing—just *supposing* the whole affair of Madame Narasate and Lolita was part of a plot; that he, or some one he's working for, persuaded or bribed the singer to be ill—she is Spanish, you know—and arranged that Lolita should be ready to make the exchange," I suggested, in a shaky voice. "You remember how Mr. Drummond found out exactly

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She was hurriedly unwinding the veil that covered her hair.

where the prince's day-nursery was? He might be pretty sure the night one wasn't far off. And he wouldn't let the duchess send her car."

"By Jove, that *dress-basket!*" broke in Captain O'Malley.

"That's just what I was thinking of," said I; "and I heard Mr. Drummond asking her in Spanish if something was *big enough.*"

"The duke's Platon shall chase Lolita's Clunière and catch it before it

gets to town, or my name isn't Pat O'Malley!" cried that dear boy—and I almost loved him, he looked so handsome and determined.

"You really do believe, then, that there may be something in my suspicion?" I asked.

"I'm sure there's everything in it," he answered.

"But we haven't much to go on," said I.

"We'll go on what we've got," said he.

"Ought I to tell the queen?" I wanted to know.

Captain O'Malley thought a minute, and then was of opinion that I had better, because she would tell Queen Victoria of Spain, who would be buoyed up with hope; and he would tell the King of Spain and the duke. The young father would want to go on the motor chase, of course, and the duke would quietly see that Mr. Drummond got no idea that he was suspected until he could be "nabbed," as Captain O'Malley expressed it, in case he proved to be guilty.

So that was the way it arranged itself. While Mr. Drummond was proposing some wonderful scheme to Queen Victoria, the King of Spain and the duke slipped out with Captain O'Malley, and I told Queen Alexandra about the thumbograph book and everything that had happened since the day it went the rounds. Then, while seeming only to console Queen Victoria, as one sweet woman might console another, my queen passed on the story, and added that the King of Spain and Captain O'Malley were off by that time chasing Lolita's motor-car.

Still, when one came to think of it, even that news wasn't as comforting as I had hoped at first, because there were several ways, any one of which the dancer might have arranged to take. We couldn't even be sure she would go back to London. But when the Duke of Sussex came back, and had "shed" Mr. Drummond on another man already initiated into the secret, things were better, because the King

of Spain and Captain O'Malley had thought of that difficulty and obviated it as far as possible. Luckily, the duke has four motor-cars, each one with its own chauffeur, and the cars of several guests were also in the garage. All had seen Lolita's motor, which is red, with a limousine body and a very long chassis, so they knew the quarry, and wouldn't make a mistake. Six cars had gone dashing off on the quest, each one taking a different way, and, as all were powerful, there wasn't much chance for Lolita and her precious dress-basket to escape.

Wouldn't I have given anything to be in one of those cars! But that's the worst of being a woman. You always have to wait for news from the front, where the things you're dying to see are going on.

Meanwhile, it hadn't been forgotten that the motor-cars *might* have been sent off on a wild-goose chase. The duke had telephoned to Scotland Yard, telling what had happened, but desiring the utmost secrecy; and, of course, you may be certain, dear, that the enormous castle—as big as a village!—had been searched from roof to cellars, in every nook and cranny; and there were bands out ransacking the whole neighborhood, one of which was led by Mr. Drummond himself!

Everybody concerned was pledged to secrecy, however, as to what had really occurred, and even the searchers out of doors were primed with a plausible story which wasn't exactly a fib.

I shall never forget what we all suffered from suspense; and think what it must have been for that poor young mother! It seemed about ten years, but actually it was only an hour and a half between the moment of the alarm and the moment when the first motor-car came back. Oh, joy, it was the one with the King of Spain and Captain O'Malley, and they had the baby prince!

Wasn't it too splendid? It was just as I thought. He was fast asleep in Lolita's dress-basket, and never waked up till his father put him in his mother's arms.

Captain O'Malley told me all about the chase. How they sighted the red car, and then, as they began to gain on it, Lolita's chauffeur seemed to suspect that the following motor was after him for a purpose. He put on a tremendous spurt of speed, but the way was clear, and the duke's motor, being of higher power than Lolita's, naturally gained and gained until it caught the red car up, raced along on a level, and Captain O'Malley threatened Lolita's chauffeur with a revolver, yelling that he'd shoot if the fellow didn't stop. That set his courage leaking, and he proceeded to slow up, though Lolita looked out of the window on one side and her maid on the other, each calling him a coward.

Both the king and my nice Irishman jumped down, opened the car, and very politely told the dancer that they'd come for her dress-basket. She abused them like pickpockets, even the king; but she could not help herself, so they took the basket, which was inside the car, set it on the ground, opened it, and found the baby, as peaceful and happy as the Sleeping Beauty.

Then they made Lolita and her maid get into the duke's car and be driven back to Carmonceux by the trusty chauffeur, who could be beguiled with no Spanish blandishments, while they followed with the little prince in Lolita's own car.

On the way an automobile with two tremendously important people from Scotland Yard caught them up, traveling at a great pace; and at the castle the fair Lolita and Mr. Henry Drummond were both arrested.

Oh, you've no idea how nice all the royalties and everybody else have been to me since! I was afraid they would blame me for not speaking at first, as things turned out; but they all say I couldn't have done differently, and was very clever to "put two and two together" as I did. The Queen of Spain has given me the most glorious pendant you can imagine—one of her own, a ruby heart, surrounded by diamonds; and the ruby is a famous one, with a name

and a history. She said something kind about a "grateful heart," and this was to remind me of it always. I am so happy.

Now you may understand why I've been speaking of Mr. Drummond in the *past tense*. Not that he is dead, or that they can keep him in prison, for they cannot *prove* that he is Gentleman Dave resurrected, and he won't admit it. He confessed—perhaps because Lolita gave him away in an hysterical fit—that he was "acting for Catalonia." The baby prince was to be held for ransom—not money, but a promise from the king to give Catalonia autonomy. It seems she's been seething for a long time with the desire to be made a separate province; and some prominent men, who will be punished, I suppose, bribed Henry Drummond to help on the scheme at Carmonceux Castle. This isn't the first time the same thing has been tried in different ways, but I should think it will be the last.

Lolita is a Catalanian, and quite a female "patriot," I believe she calls herself, so she readily consented to mix herself up in the plot, and it was all nicely mapped out before Henry Drummond came to Carmonceux, even to Madame Narasate falling ill. But to do the singer justice, she knew *nothing* of what was going on. She fancied she was being bribed to give Lolita a chance.

Mr. Drummond will be permitted to melt vaguely away into space, I hear from Captain O'Malley, because of the royal wish for secrecy; but he will never be allowed in England again, or in Spain. Perhaps next time he turns up trumps he will be thought-reading for the Emperor of China.

Good-by, dearest dear. This is a long letter, but I hope it won't bore you.

Your loving

PEGGY.

P. S.—I wonder if I really am falling a tiny bit in love with Captain O'Malley. I do trust not, because it would be so inconvenient, as I understand a match has been, or is to be, arranged for him.



BY WILLIAM PATTERSON WHITE.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. A. LEMON

PATRICIA and I had squabbled. It was nothing new for us to squabble. We disagree on nearly everything, from the number of dances I think she should give me to the proper method of handling a boat. But this particular time it was not my fault. I had broken an engagement with Jack Provost in order to take her sailing. Then, when I proposed to her, she refused me—for the third time since June. Naturally, I was a little hurt, and I ventured to argue with her. But Patricia is strong on argument—she went to Wellesley—and she held forth on women's rights and spheres until I asked her to stop. She didn't like that at all, and said I was rude.

Then Mulvaney, my prize bull terrier, fell overboard, and when I hauled him in he shook the water off on her dress. That ruffled Patricia still further, and she called Mulvaney a brute. Now, you can't expect a bull terrier to have polished manners, and I pointed that out to Patricia, and said that Mulvaney was worth two hundred dollars and the dress not more than fifteen. Patricia was hopping mad at once, and said I was insulting, and wouldn't speak all the way back to the dock. Isn't that just like a girl?

Patricia lived in the next cottage to

ours on the ocean front, so I thought I might as well step in and patch up the peace. She was lying in the hammock, seemingly absorbed in a book. Indeed, she was so deeply interested that she did not look up even when I stood on the porch.

"Patricia," I began uncomfortably.

Patricia lifted two very cool blue eyes.

"Mr. Drummond," she said icily, "I wish you would go home."

I stared at her in amazement, while Mulvaney panted up and lay down on the top step. Patricia was undoubtedly angry, and the longer I stood there the more I felt like a small boy who has been paddled by his teacher. I turned to go, but paused at the head of the steps for a last look at Patricia. Something peculiar about the book cover caught my eyes, and I laughed.

"Patricia," I said, with my hand on the railing, "'The Inconsequent' is very interesting, but I honestly think you'd enjoy it more if you held it right-side up."

And then I went blithely down the boardwalk, whistling "Mandalay," because I knew Patricia hated it.

Arrived on my own veranda, or rather my sister's husband's veranda, I dropped into a long wicker chair and

lit my pipe, which is one friend I can usually depend on. The pipe didn't seem to respond very well, however, and I smoked gloomily, and turned over in my mind the recent squabble with Patricia. This time I appeared to have mixed things up very badly, and to set matters straight again would require diplomacy and apologies.

I had smoked for perhaps half an hour, settled the apologies, and was just starting in on the diplomacy part, when my sister swept out upon the porch and shattered my thoughts at one fell swoop.

"Bobby," she said, in a heartbroken voice, "the nurse is leaving."

It was evidently a calamity, so I hastened to sympathize.

"Cheer up, Madge," I said hopefully, "there is still the cook."

"No, there isn't," wailed my sister ungrammatically. "She left on this morning's boat. You know how miserable the coffee was at breakfast? I couldn't drink it, and when I reproved her she immediately packed her things and left. It is exceedingly annoying, when you consider that the waitress left yesterday."

Here Madge dabbed at her eyes with a ridiculously small handkerchief, swallowed hard, and became once more my energetic sister.

"I simply must have servants," she continued. "So I'll have to go to town for three at once. Run down to Captain Walkland's, Bob, and tell him to have his power boat ready at one o'clock to take me across to Bayshore. I can catch the two-seventeen in, and Tom will bring me out to-night. There, run along."

"But, Madge," I remonstrated, "you've forgotten the kid. Who'll take care of him while you're gone?"

"Oh, that's all arranged," said Madge calmly, turning to reënter the house. "You will, of course. Hurry, Bob! I must catch that train!"

Blank dismay settled all over me, and cold chills ran riot in my spine.

"Madge, dear!" I implored desperately. "If you have any regard for your long-suffering brother you'll take that

blessed child over to the Hales'. They adore babies, and will be only too glad to take care of him."

"Nonsense!" returned my sister severely. "I wouldn't think of such a thing. You ought to feel complimented at my reposing such a trust in you, instead of——"

But I had gone—Madge, as usual, proving too much for me.

I have had various trying experiences with my small nephew, and I knew his little ways, so it was in no pleasant frame of mind that I made the arrangements with Captain Walkland.

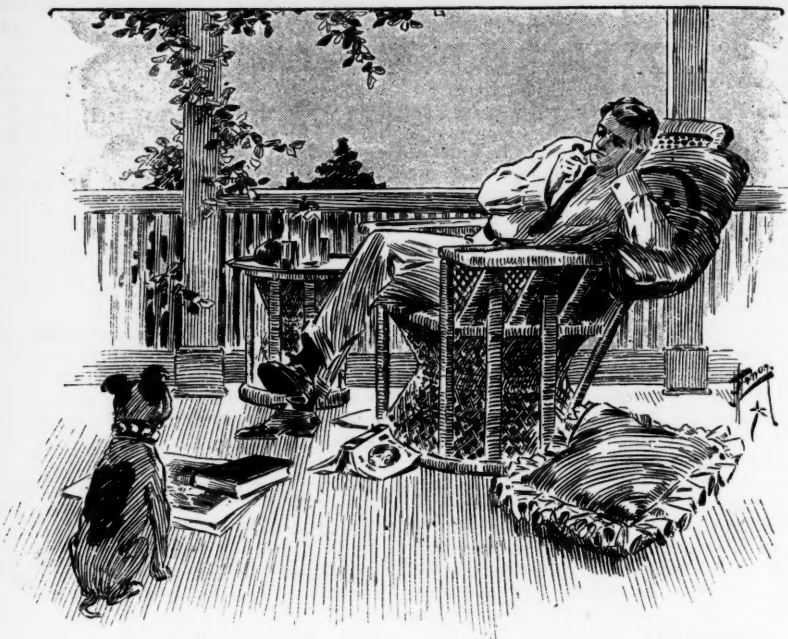
An hour later I watched my sister go down the boardwalk. She had said she would leave orders at the hotel for them to send up my luncheon and dinner, so I was in no danger of starving. Her last words had been instructions for me to give the baby—his full name is Robert John Cunningham—his warm milk at five o'clock, and to keep him asleep as much as possible. Trust me for that! I knew when he woke up he would howl for his mother, and without her or the nurse, no power short of knockout drops could quiet him. I could not bring myself to use knockout drops on a helpless child, so I lay in the hammock and hoped for the best.

A bellboy brought my luncheon, and, that disposed of, I went upstairs for a look at young hopeful. He was sound asleep in his crib, his chubby fists doubled up, and a most angelic expression on his face. Raphael's cherubs can't hold a candle to Robert John—when he's asleep. I breathed a heartfelt prayer that he stay that way until his mother returned, but I knew it was hopeless. He invariably awoke about three o'clock, and it was then his cheerful custom to howl with might and main until some one rocked him. I shuddered at the bare idea and went downstairs again.

I walked out on the porch and found Jack Provost sitting on the railing.

"You're a nice one," said Jack. "Why did you run off from me this morning?"

"The reason was plain," I rejoined morosely.



I smoked gloomily.

"Oh, was it?" said Jack facetiously. "I always thought it was remarkably good-looking."

"Don't be a fool."

"I'm not. But why are you so glum?"

"I'm all alone with Robert John. His mother's gone to town and left me in charge. I'm very glad you came. Now you can stay and help me take care of him."

"No, thanks," said Jack hastily. "I'm in the race to-day, so it's quite impossible. Sorry I can't stay, old man. I would if I could, but I'm afraid he'll wake up." And thereupon Jack departed.

I sat down in the hammock once more and picked up a magazine, but the story I started to read was not soothing. The heroine was a young lady with "burnt-orange hair and a face like a fay." I had never met such a girl, but I instinctively felt that I wouldn't like her

if I did. I threw the magazine aside in disgust. At that instant a long howl sounded from above. The infant was ahead of his schedule, and I bounded upstairs to see what ailed him.

When I reached his crib and looked in he was red in the face, beating the coverlet with both fists, and squalling at the top of his lungs. I confess I didn't know just what to do. He should have been rocked, but I'm not a good rocker. His appearance was alarming, and it worried me greatly. From his screams he undoubtedly had something on his mind. Perhaps it was a pin. I know they use them on babies a good deal. I poked around him gingerly with one finger. I could feel pins, innumerable pins, but none, so far as I could find out, was sticking him.

At my first touch his squalls stopped, and he stared at me in round-eyed wonder. He regarded me solemnly for at

least a minute, evidently debating in his small brain whether or not I was a fit person to have around. At last he decided I was not, for he suddenly doubled his fists again, screwed up his features, and burst into another bellow, compared to which his previous whoops had been mere whispers. It was frightful. I was afraid he'd burst if he kept it up much longer. He'd never yelled like this before. Something had to be done, but Heaven only knew what; I didn't.

I ran to the window on the chance of seeing Mrs. Hale or some one else who understood babies. Vain hope! Far down the boardwalk a party was just turning off toward the bay. Then I remembered. This was racing day, and every house would be deserted. Not a soul would be in, and I was marooned with my troubles.

Totally desperate, I seized the screaming Robert John under the armpits and tossed him rapidly up and down. Dandling, I think, is the technical name for the operation. Somehow, it didn't seem to work. By all the rules, he should have stopped his crying, and laughed. He always did when my sister or the nurse joggled him about. Under my handling his bellows kept up and fat tears rolled down his cheeks in streams. Mulvaney, who had followed me upstairs, sat in the doorway, regarding us in perplexed amazement. I know he considered me quite mad.

Through the open window I could

see the porch of Patricia's cottage, and even as I looked Patricia came out of the front door and halted, as if undecided whether to sit down or go out on the boardwalk. I didn't stop to question why she hadn't gone to the races. The main thing was that she hadn't. Angry as she might be with me, she had nothing against Robert John, and if any one could quiet him she could. I determined to throw myself on her

mercy, and galloped downstairs with my beloved nephew, who, in spite of his flowing draperies, kicked and wriggled so enthusiastically that I almost dropped him.

Patricia was still on the porch when I clattered up the front walk. Her anger of the morning seemed to have disappeared, for she laughed at me frankly. I, myself, felt far from humorous.

"Oh, Patricia!" I gasped, when I was still some steps from the porch. "Will you take this blessed infant and stop his yells? He's driving me to drink."

"Why, of course," she replied in her usual sweet tones. "Give him to me. The poor, little, neglected darling! What have you been doing to him? Madge should have known better than to leave you in charge of a baby."

Contempt was rampant in her voice, but I didn't care; Robert John was out of my hands at last.

Patricia cradled the neglected darling in her arms and cuddled her face against his, murmuring unintelligible words into his plump neck. As if by



I seized the screaming Robert John under the armpits, and tossed him rapidly up and down.

magic his howls dwindled, subsided gradually into gurgles and hard panting, and then a smile beamed on his tear-stained little face. More cuddlings and more unknown language; Robert John beat his, chubby hands together, chuckling and wheezing with delight. It was evident that he liked Patricia.

"Thank heaven, the country's saved!" I said, with relief, when I saw the miracle accomplished. "May I stay, Patricia?" I added. "I'll be good, really."

She looked at me doubtfully, then smiled. My heart gained three beats immediately. She is a very pretty girl anyway, is Patricia, but when she smiles and shows those two dimples, she's positively angelic.

"Yes," she said at last, "you may. Go in and get three or four cushions, the puffiest you can find. I'm going to sit in the big chair."

I found three very puffy cushions with gorgeous embroidery that Robert John would enjoy picking at, and brought them out. Patricia, the baby, and the cushions quite filled the big chair, and I sat down opposite where I could look at them.

"You haven't answered my question," said Patricia. "What made the baby cry?"

I never met any girl quite like Patricia; she always wants her questions answered.

"Nothing, nothing at all," I hastened to assure her. "He simply woke up and bawled. At first, I thought something might be sticking him, but nothing was, so I guess it's only temper and a small pain mixed. It certainly is providential that I found you in."

"Yes," murmured Patricia, "it is very fortunate."

"I was afraid you had gone to see the race like every one else."

"I didn't feel like it. I don't enjoy watching the race from the clubhouse porch. The rocking-chair fleet always chatters, and Mr. Symons and Mr. Newhall always quarrel over so-and-so's sailing. It's too bad you couldn't have been in it."

"Not at all. I'd much rather be here."

"I'm afraid, Bob," said Patricia slowly, "you're a very lazy person. You follow too much the path of least resistance."

"I don't!" I protested indignantly. "I spent one whole summer out West running up and down the most perpendicular country you ever saw. If only you had seen me then, urging a reluctant pack horse up the side of a cliff, and hanging on to his tail to keep from falling over backward, you wouldn't call me lazy."

"Yes, I know all about your wild and woolly doings out there. Wellesley Taylor told me. He said you were a most disreputable person, and always refused to wash the dishes."

"Wellesley is a cheerful one. We used to put the dishes in the creek every night, and the dog licked them besides."

"That'll do!" she exclaimed, horrified. "Your regard for the truth is getting less and less."

I dropped into silence, and Patricia turned her attention to Robert John who was rapturously sucking his thumb. The two in the chair made a very pretty picture, and I thought that if Patricia could see herself as I saw her, she would change her views regarding woman's proper sphere. I couldn't help wondering why she hadn't gone to the race. Her reasons for not going were absurd, because she is greatly interested in sailing and would rather watch a race than eat. Perhaps she had not gone because we had quarreled in the morning. I selfishly hoped such was the case, and took heart accordingly.

"Patricia!" I said suddenly.

She looked up inquiringly.

"I wish——" I began.

"Bob!" she interrupted hastily. "Isn't it time for the baby's milk?"

Bless the child! What I intended saying was much more important than Robert John's dinner; nevertheless, I had to go and get his bottle.

At our house I found Mulvaney reposing on the sofa among the best cushions. It was against Madge's strict orders, but he looked so comfortable I hadn't the heart to disturb him.



Patricia turned her attention to Robert John who was rapturously sucking his thumb.

When I returned the baby was slumbering peacefully, one plump hand clutching Patricia's forefinger.

"Here it is," I said, holding out the bottle to Patricia.

She looked at the bottle, then looked at me with scorn in her eye.

"Bob, you are the limit! Don't you know that if you give a baby cold milk he'll have convulsions? Take it to the cook and tell her to warm it."

Totally squelched, I carried the bottle out to the kitchen, and explained matters to the cook.

"Shure, Mr. Drummond," said the cook, who was French, "I'll fix it up nice an' warm fer the little darlin'."

In a few minutes the maid brought out the bottle. Patricia took it, sniffed at it, and doing so moved the sleeping baby. Robert John awoke immediately; he must have thought I had him, for

he protested whoopingly, and an old lady on the boardwalk stopped and stared at us with great interest. Patricia poked the bottle at the squalling child, who seized it with both hands, stopped yelling, and proceeded to get outside of the contents as fast as he could, frowning tremendously the while, as if he thought we intended to deprive him of his nourishment.

"Isn't he a little dear?" observed Patricia, looking down at Robert John with a tender smile on her mouth. I had never seen precisely that look on her face before, and I thought it uncommonly pretty.

"He's an angel," I agreed fervently. If she had said the sky was yellow I'd have said so, too. That's the way I felt just then.

"Patricia," I continued, "do you remember what you said on the boat this morning?"

"I remember you were very rude," she replied coldly, looking the other way.

"But you shouldn't," I said. "Forget that part entirely. I mean, do you remember what you said about woman's sphere, and—and all that sort of thing?"

"I forget," said Patricia, looking down at the baby again.

"Oh, no, you don't. You remember perfectly, and if you could only see yourself now you'd change your mind."

She continued to look down, but I

could see the warm color steal up into her cheeks.

"Patricia," I said beseechingly, "please forgive me about the dress. I didn't mean to be rude. Honest Injun!"

She raised her head and smiled, her cheeks still pink.

"Bobby, I made that dress myself, and the material cost just eight ninety-four. That's what made me angry. I wanted you to appreciate it, and you didn't."

"I did! I mean I do!" I stammered, and took possession of one of her hands, regardless of who might be passing. "But I appreciate you still more, and I want you, dear. You haven't any idea how much, and I can't tell you. Oh, Patricia, I love you so, and if you say no this time I'll go far away and never come back, and then I hope you'll be sorry."

This harrowing picture of my lonely future must have affected Patricia, for she let her hand stay where it was.

"Patricia!" I whispered anxiously. "Are you really going to send me away?"

She looked up at me with moist and shining eyes and the tender smile I had never seen before that afternoon.

"No, Bobby," she said softly, "I'd rather have you stay. No! You mustn't!" as I made a sudden movement. "Not now. You'll disturb the baby."



Solace

ABOUT our feet the wild sweet peas
Had spread their pink and purple dye;
The young moon, like a lady's brooch,
Pinned the pale satin of the sky.

Ah, love! The Death that came to seize
Your life, my hopes, my joys to be,
Proved, after all, a clumsy thief—
He left that perfect hour to me!

—JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



PARSIFAL

THE GRAND OPERA OF A FOOL

By Rupert Hughes

Author of "The Greatest of Opera Composers," "Modern French Opera,"
"The Great Melodists of Italy," etc.

PIANO tuning with impediments."

This was the epitaph that one critic, Alfred von Mensi, meant to write for Wagner's last opera, "Parsifal." It would seem the critic wrote rather his own epitaph than Wagner's. But this is largely a matter of taste.

There are those to whom "Parsifal" is a divinely noble work, and there are those—great lovers of Wagner's other works, too—who dislike it so perfectly that they cannot decide which is the worse, the libretto or the music.

And speaking of the hostile criticism, which Wagner inspired to an astonishing degree, there has recently appeared an assault so fervent that, to my thinking, it eclipses them all. It was written in one of John Ruskin's private letters, published only this season, and it may be accepted as sincere, at least, if nothing else. He is writing about Wagner's beautiful "Die Meistersinger."

"Of all the bête, clumsy, blundering, boggling, baboon-headed stuff I ever saw on a human stage, that thing last night beat—as far as the story and acting went—and of all the affected, sapless, soulless, beginningless, endless, topless, bottomless, topsiturstiest, tuneless, scannelpiaviest tongs and boniest doggerel of sounds I ever endured the deadliest of, that eternity of nothing was the deadliest as far as sound went. I never was so relieved so far as I can remember in my life by the stopping of any sounds, not excepting railroad whistles, as I was by the cessation of

the cobbler's bellowing; even the serenaders' caricatured twangle was rest afterward. As for the great Lied (Walther's Prize Song), I never made out where it began and where it ended except by the fellow's coming off the horseblock."

Many artists and critics declare that, while John Ruskin was the most popular of writers on the painter's art, he was the worst possible judge of it. There can hardly be any question that he was a small judge of great music.

If Ruskin found Wagner's one comic opera so stupid for all its sanity, its realism, and its overflowing joy of life, what superlatives would he not have heaped up for "Parsifal," which is a bone of contention even among Wagnerians?

But it is lucky for a work of art to be a bone of contention. "Hamlet," the greatest of all plays, in the general opinion, is also the most dispute-engendering of all dramas. And "Parsifal" is the most wranglesome of operas.

The strangest thing about it is its unpleasant effect upon so many otherwise ultra-Wagnerians. Critics, who raved over every other of the operas, railed at this, found it insufferably dull, or ridiculously chaotic and unconvincing. At the same time people who knew little of opera and were not schooled in Wagner went into raptures over "Parsifal," and after sitting at it all afternoon and all evening longed for more.

I confess that I was one of the Wagnerians who could not stomach "Parsifal." When it was first done here, I paid ten dollars for a seat and sat there determined to get my money's worth of agony, as if Wagner were a dentist and I had paid him in advance. After the operation was over, I vowed that I would pay twenty-five dollars a seat not to hear it again. When I was awake I was miserable, and when I was bored to sleep I had bad dreams. And yet I heard on all sides rhapsodies of delight and of awe-smitten reverence.

I would not set myself up against the rest, and I am heartily sorry and heartily ashamed to see so many thousands of people getting a noble rapture out of something that is beyond me. There can be no debate as to the sincerity of the general approval of "Parsifal." There can be no public hypocrisy in an admiration that has enriched the institution at Bayreuth and has turned the Metropolitan Opera House into a huge sardine can every time the work has been done here. Therefore those of us who cannot revel in its clover fields must stick to our own thistle patches.

The history of the work "Parsifal" can be briefly told, though it was long in the making. In earlier articles I have outlined the strange battle Wagner had with poverty and critical hostility. Wherever his music appeared it sowed dragons' teeth, and they sprang up armed critics. Eventually, when his affairs were most strait and most desperate, a king came floating to his rescue like another *Lohengrin* in a swan boat. The king was Ludwig II of Bavaria; he was mad except when the wind was from the northwest and when music was in question. Then he stepped through the thin partition and became a genius.

Wagner's gratitude took the form almost of idolatry, and in the sparse-witted king he seemed to see the figure of that pure-hearted, pitiful, divinely wise fool whom he made the hero of "Parsifal." In 1865 he sketched the plot. It was twelve years before he finished the text, which was published

Christmas Day, 1877. It was two years more before the music was outlined, and the orchestration took three years more. The opera was produced in 1832 at the theatre which had been built for Wagner by funds gathered throughout the world.

To Wagner the work was one to which he consecrated himself and by which he consecrated his opera house. The figure of *Parsifal* had grown to be a sort of Christ in his eyes. There is some debate on this point, but Wagner's own letter of September 28th, 1880, ought to end it:

I have been asking myself seriously how I can rescue this last and most holy work of mine from the fate of a vulgar operatic career. How can and dare there be produced in theatres like ours, and together with a mixed opera repertory, a story (*Handlung*) in which the most exalted mysteries of the Christian religion are depicted in the open scene? I can well understand that the church might object to the performances of these sacred mysteries on boards where yesterday and to-morrow Frivolity holds sway. Because of this feeling I entitle my "Parsifal" a "consecrational festival play." Therefore I must seek a stage to which I can consecrate the play, and that stage is nowhere else than in Bayreuth. Never shall "Parsifal" be produced on any other stage, and it is my one and only desire to find means whereby I can encompass that end.

His wishes were held sacred until a few years ago, when advantage was taken of the outrageous condition of our copyright laws to produce the work in New York, in spite of the protests of Wagner's widow and her appeal to the law courts. The piracy was legal enough as written laws go, and it has been exceedingly popular in its German text and in an English version.

Sacred as the work was to Wagner, and is to many of his retainers, it is a curious mixture of sacrilege and paganism, and it is a far cry from the original legends on which he based it. These were "Perceval the Gaul," written in 1175 by Chrétien de Troies, and the so-called epic, "Parzival," a rhymed romance of some twenty-five thousand lines, written in the thirteenth century by Wolfram von Eschenbach, who, by the way, is a lovable character in "Tannhäuser" and sings there the beautiful

romance of the "Evening Star." And *Parsifal*, by the same way, was the father of Wagner's other hero, *Lohengrin*, who came from and went back to the very castle on Montsalvat which is the scene of "Parsifal."

The strange woman *Kundry*, who plays so large a part in the opera, is not found in the two poems on which the libretto was established. To quote from Mr. W. J. Henderson's biography of Wagner:

"*Kundry* is entirely Wagner's creation. In Wolfram's story, *Condrie* is the messenger who upbraids *Parsifal* for not healing the sick king, and *Orgeluse* is the beautiful woman who tempts *Gawain*. Wagner has united the two, but has created a personality of his own. According to one of the legends, *Kundry* was Herodias, the daughter of Herod, and had been cursed for having laughed at the head of John the Baptist on a charger. Wagner makes her a woman who had laughed at the suffering Christ and had been condemned by Him to endless laughter. Thenceforward she wanders through the world in search of her redeemer."

Another interesting point is found in "Studies in the Wagnerian Drama," where the author, Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, notes that in Wolfram's poem *Parsifal* was married and hated to leave his wife for the Quest, and longed for her again. Mr. Krehbiel finds this figure far more "amiable" than Wagner's ascetic hero; for Wagner's *Parsifal* was not only never married, but he was kissed only once in his life, and didn't like it!

But first to outline the plot: Every one who has read the legends of King Arthur knows of the Holy Grail, the sacred chalice from which Christ drank at the Last Supper, and in which the blood that flowed from His wounded side was caught and kept forever. During the wars with the infidel this cup and the spear that pierced the Saviour's side were entrusted by the angels to the care of a group of pure-hearted knights gathered by *Titurcl* in a great castle in the Pyrenees. Only the whitest of souls could join this company, and their chastity was rewarded

with a more than human valor, renewed every year by a dove from heaven.

Now there was a man of sin named *Klingsor* who envied *Titurcl* and the Knights of the Grail, but, being unable to free his heart of evil, had been denied admission. He had turned to the Evil One and bartered his soul for the gifts of sorcery. With these he waged war on *Titurcl's* men. He established a pleasant garden of marvelous beings, half flowers, half women, with strange gifts of seduction. Thus he led many of the Grail Knights astray. They became his prisoners.

At length *Titurcl*, being very old, resigned his crown to his son *Amfortas*, who determined to overthrow *Klingsor*. But the flower maidens were too fascinating for him, and he fell. Even the sacred spear was captured by *Klingsor*, who thrust it in *Amfortas's* side, as he fled back to Montsalvat bearing with him unutterable shame and a bitter wound. This wound, he was warned from Heaven, could never heal until a guileless fool should appear, rescue the lance, and touch it to the wound with healing magic.

A word more of *Kundry*. She is a strange dual soul, cursed of old for having laughed at Christ's agony, and now enslaved by *Klingsor*. Her better self keeps her as the servant and magic messenger of the Knights of the Grail, a wild, unkempt creature. But at times she falls into a deep hypnotic sleep like another *Trilby*, under the spell of the Svengalic *Klingsor*. Then she becomes a woman of "terrible beauty," devoted to the seduction of the Knights of the Grail.

The first curtain rises on a forest near the sacred lake. An old Knight of the Grail, *Gurnemanz*, and his two squires are preparing the bath in which *Amfortas* is to attempt to assuage his pain. *Kundry* appears, a sort of uncouth *Ariel*, bringing a phial containing a balm she has just fetched from Arabia. *Amfortas* is carried in, bewailing his sin and his suffering. *Kundry* gives him the phial, and he is carried out to the lake. The squires accuse *Kundry*

of, evil intent, and wonder at the fact that she is always absent when a mishap befalls one of the knights. She cannot explain why.

Now cries are heard from the lake, and a wild swan flutters in and dies, pierced by an arrow. The miscreant is caught and brought forward. He is a foolish dolt who does not understand his own cruelty; indeed, he does not know his own name, or anything except that his mother's name was *Heart-break* (or *Herzeleide*). *Kundry* knows his history and tells him of it, whereupon with sudden violence he attacks her and then falls into a sort of epilepsy from which he is revived by *Kundry*, but she herself now feels a sleep coming upon her and fights it hard but vainly, sinking asleep unheeded, behind a bush.

Amfortas, still unhelped, is carried back to the castle, whither *Parsifal* is led by *Gurnemanz*. Here Wagner, the scenic Belasco, seeks the effect of travel, by having the scenery at the back roll past slowly, eventually leading through rocks and tunnels up to the great domed hall of the castle where the bells are clanging and the knights file in to gather about a table for Communion service.

It is *Amfortas'* duty to celebrate the Eucharist, and to undergo for his sin all the pains of the Crucifixion. He elevates the Grail and, by magic, in each of the cups is a draught of wine and at each plate a sacred wafer. The Communion is held, and *Amfortas* endures his pangs again. The Grail is withdrawn and *Amfortas* carried out.

During the long ceremony *Parsifal* has stood motionless, but feeling in his own side the ache of *Amfortas'* pain. Sympathy has at last awakened in his dull heart. *Gurnemanz*, who had hoped that he might be the redeeming guileless fool, is deceived by his inaction and thrusts him out of the castle.

The second act shows the palace of *Klingsor*, whose sorcery has revealed to him that *Parsifal* is really what *Gurnemanz* thought him not to be. *Klingsor* is determined to make him a victim of his unholy spells. He weaves in-

cantation which will draw *Parsifal* into his influence, and he also calls *Kundry* to him. He mocks her for returning to Montsalvat as soon as his spell leaves her, and announces that to-day she must decoy and ruin *Parsifal* himself. She struggles furiously, but his wizardry overwhelms her, and she goes to prepare for her task.

The castle vanishes into the earth and reveals the enchanted garden of the flower maidens. *Parsifal* arrives, wandering blindly, and the petalled sirens gather about him and try to enchant him with some of the most enchanting music ever written by man. But he is repelled and repels them.

Suddenly he hears a voice calling "*Parsifal!*" He remembers that his mother called him by that name, and, thrusting the flowers aside, he runs to find a woman of wonderful beauty.

It is *Kundry*—as the irreverent might say, *Kundry* with her hair combed and in a braid. She begins her work, diabolically, by rousing in him the emotions of a son for his mother, recalling *Herzeleide's* tenderness.

Thus she gets *Parsifal* in her arms, then she presses on his lips a kiss of such unmotherly ardor that *Parsifal* starts away in terror. He feels a pain in his heart, and this sends his thoughts back to *Amfortas*, whose anguish he seems to feel in himself. He realizes, too, that this pain was brought upon the king by his weakness before this very seduction. He repulses *Kundry* with horror.

Real love awakens now in her heart, and she pours out to him the story of her own sufferings since she mocked at Christ. She begs him to redeem her by giving her his love. He is strong enough to promise to aid her only by holy deeds; he will not share her infamy. She invokes a curse upon his every future effort to find Montsalvat again.

Klingsor, coming to the rescue, hurls at *Parsifal* the sacred spear which wounded *Amfortas*. But it pauses in air, harmlessly resting above the head of the guileless fool. He seizes it and makes the sign of the cross. Instantly

Klingsor's power is gone, his airy palace crumbles, the flower maidens wither and die. Erect among the ruins, *Parsifal* bids farewell to the prostrate *Kundry*, telling her that pardon waits for her—yonder.

The third act opens on a flowery slope near a hut inhabited by *Gurnemanz*, who dwells there a disconsolate hermit. Hearing groans, he comes forth to find *Kundry* asleep in a heap of brushwood and troubled by evil dreams. He wakens her and finds her less wild and eerie than before. She has come back to her service, but *Gurnemanz* says that there is nothing to do, as the Knights of the Grail sit within doors mourning and despairing. *Amfortas* no longer holds Communion, and the knights are languishing unrenewed. *Titirel* has died this very day.

A warrior in black armor, with visor closed, comes in wearily and sinks exhausted. *Gurnemanz* tells him that he must not wear armor in these domains, especially on the anniversary of the Crucifixion. The knight rising strikes into the ground his lance, lays off his armor, and kneels to pray. It is *Parsifal*, who has wandered for years, struggling to find his way to the Castle of the Grail, but prevented by the curses of *Kundry*. He tells *Gurnemanz* that he has fought many battles and suffered many wounds, but has kept the lance immaculate. When he learns from *Gurnemanz* of the disasters that have befallen the Knights of the Grail, *Parsifal* is so overcome that he faints. *Gurnemanz* revives him, and *Kundry*, kneeling, washes his feet, anoints them, and dries them with her hair, while *Gurnemanz* anoints *Parsifal* as the new prince and pontiff of the Grail, to succeed the unworthy *Amfortas*.

Parsifal, now hallowed, absolves *Kundry* of her sins. As she weeps at his feet he looks about to see how nature, revived by the rain of repentant tears, breaks forth into new bloom under the spell of Good Friday. This is the wonderful Good Friday music, which was written long before the rest of the opera.

Gurnemanz now clothes *Parsifal* as a

Knight of the Grail, and the three make their way to the great hall of the castle where the bells are again summoning the knights to Communion. *Amfortas* is brought in on his litter, and *Titirel's* body in its coffin.

Amfortas cannot endure the thought of his agony when the Grail shall be elevated, and he pleads for death, begging his knights to drive their swords into his wound, which he exposes to their horrified eyes.

Parsifal strides forward and touches it with the spear, and it is healed. He then pays homage to the chalice and celebrates the Eucharist. The Holy Grail glows with a supernal light that illumines the whole thing. *Titirel* from his coffin pronounces a farewell blessing, and a dove from heaven fluttering down hovers over the head of the guileless fool, at whose feet *Kundry*, *Amfortas*, and all the knights kneel in adoration, chanting a psalm of thanksgiving.

This, in brief, is the amazing story of this amazing work. One can only call it stupendous. Everybody agrees on that epithet; the quarrel is over what noun to fasten it on. Some say "stupendous majesty"; some say "stupendous rot."

H. S. Chamberlain is "tempted to call 'Parsifal' the drama of all dramas." Mr. Lawrence Gilman, in his "Phases of Modern Music," says:

"It is undeniable that in 'Parsifal' Wagner has not written with the torrential energy, the superbly prodigal invention, which went to the creation of his earlier works; he is not here, unquestionably, so compelling and forceful, so overwhelming in vitality and climacteric power, as in the exuberant masterpieces of his artistic prime. But never before, on the other hand, had this master of illusions shaped such haunting and subtle symbols of suffering and lamentation, of sadness and terror, of pity and aspiration.

"In no other work are to be found those qualities of grave and poignant tenderness, of august beauty, of essential exaltation, that make the score of 'Parsifal' the great and moving thing it

is. Not elsewhere in Wagner's writing is there such a theme as that which the commentators have chosen to identify as the 'second *Herzeleide* motive,' which appears for the first time when *Kundry*, in the garden scene of the second act, tells *Parsifal* of his mother's anguish after he had left her; nor has he equaled the portentous impressiveness of the chromatic passages of the 'changing' scene in the last act; and how piercing are the phrases with which the 'Good Friday' scene closes!"

Vernon Blackburn wrote in his book of essays, "The Fringe of an Art":

"Seen and heard as a whole, 'Parsifal' may be understood and appreciated at its true worth. There is not a motif, from the first most solemn opening, that is not in its way perfect and true melody, haunting, ineffably beautiful. Just now I compared the whole work to the opening and shutting of a flower; and I would use the same illustration to describe the separate motifs—and particularly the Good Friday music—of 'Parsifal.' They open, as it were, like the petals of a flower, slowly expanding, to reveal the depth and beauty of the blossom, and they close rhythmically, leaving unutterable memories and dim, tearful signs of beauty within the inner circles of the heart. They are full of thoughts that lie too deep for tears. Long after the ear has listened to the actual sound, they return with a power, with an overwhelming and indefinite shadowing, that make this music a thing forever apart and sacred."

Only the other day Mr. Henry T. Finck wrote of "Salome": "Five minutes of the delicious music of 'Parsifal' serve as an antidote to all the ptomaine poison of the Strauss opera."

Contrast with these and other praises of "Parsifal" the criticisms of James Huneker in his "Overtures," from which I make random excerpts:

"Wagner was not always a 'Wagnerian.' He loved to play practical jokes, and it would not be surprising if some day we should learn that 'Parsifal' was one of his jokes on an epical scale. I cannot admire 'Parsifal,' and I am

giving my reasons for this dislike. One ounce of humor, of common sense, puts to flight the sham ethical and the sham æsthetical of the 'Parsifal' worshippers.

"In all the complicated web of this drama Pity and Renunciation are the two principal motives. Wagner drew his themes from all sources—sagas, legends, poems, and histories. He incorporated episodes from the Saviour's life and boldly utilized the theme of the Last Supper. Side by side, he places the semi-Saracenic *Klingsor*. *Parsifal* is a mediæval Jesus.

"The poem is charged to the full with Semitic, Buddhistic, Patristic, Christian, and Schopenhauerian philosophies. Wagner is a weaver, not a form maker. Wagner is the great anti-naturalist among composers—this book astounds one by its puerility, its vapidness.

"You see an old-fashioned and very tedious opera—setting aside some of the music. You see a lot of women-hating men deceiving themselves with spears, drugs, old goblets, all manner of juggling formulas, and yet being waited upon by a woman—a poor, miserable witch. You see a silly youth treated as if he had murdered a human being because he shot a swan. You see then some dead bird borne away on a litter of twigs, to noble and impressive music, like a feathered *Siegfried*. Surely Wagner was without a sense of the humorous; or was he parodying his own 'Death of Siegfried' as Ibsen parodied Ibsen in 'A Wild Duck'? You see a theatrically imposing temple, wherein a maniacal king raves over an impossible wound. In act second you are transported to the familiar land of Christmas pantomime. Even that old Gounod ruse, the sign of the cross, is employed, and with overpowering effect. Now, what possesses a generation which knows Darwin, has read Herbert Spencer, and can follow with delight the unerring logic of events that unroll themselves in the Ibsen plays—what possesses this generation of ours to sit enthralled before all this nebulosity?

"The third act is but a faint replica

of the first. Here the librettist is in sore straits. So he drags in Magdalen washing the feet of *Parsifal*, which is offensively puerile. In a beatific blaze of glory—after *Parsifal* has healed the king—this sacred melodrama ends, and the spectator, drugged by the music, confused by the bells chanting the tortuous story, and his eyes intoxicated by the feasts of color, staggers away believing that he has witnessed a great work of art. So he has—the art of debauch in color, tone, and gesture.

"*Kundry* is a ridiculous hag, an Asartate, a Herodias, a Meg Merrilies, and a Mary Magdalen in one. She is *Azucena* when she reveals to *Parsifal* his parentage—perhaps Wagner had heard of 'Il Trovatore'!—and she plays Potiphar's wife to this effeminate lad. She is of the opera operatic.

"*Parsifal*, when he is not a simulacrum of Christ in white baptismal robes, is a peculiarly foolish bore. He is only an emasculate *Siegfried*. At no time is *Parsifal* a normal young man. His act of renunciation denies life.

"Wagner, luxuriously Byzantine in his faiths, erected a lordly pleasure drama in which the mystically inclined, the admirer of theatrical pomp, and the esoteric worshiper could all find solace, amusement, and consolation. Yet *Parsifal's* pale virtue can never stir us to higher issues, as do the heroic sacrifices of *Tannhäuser* and *Senta*."

The English critic, Runciman, is equally vigorous. In an essay on Bayreuth, he ridicules the affectation of Bayreuth sanctity and the presentation of this opera here:

"In Germany feminine beauty is reckoned by hundredweights. No lady of under eighteen stone is admired, but one who is heavier than that, instead of staying at home and looking after her grandchildren, is put into a brown robe and called *Kundry*; and a German audience accepts her as a revelation of ideal loveliness." He complains that "many of the flower maidens were at least eight feet in circumference."

Of the opera itself he says much that is witty if not final—for instance:

"*Siegfried* and *Parsifal* are both untaught fools; each has his understanding partly enlightened by hearing of his mother's sufferings and death—compare Wordsworth's 'A deep distress hath humanized my soul'; each has his education completed by a woman's kiss. All this may seem very profound to the German mind; but to me it is crude, a somewhat too obvious allegory, partly superficial, partly untrue, a survival of windy, sentimental, mid-century German metaphysics.

"*Parsifal*, lacking health and vitality—probably his father suffered from rickets—sees that the grief and suffering of the world outweigh and outnumber its joys, and not only renounces life, but is so overcome with pity for all sufferers as to regard it as his mission to heal and console them. And having healed and consoled one, he deliberately turns from the green world, with its trees and flowers, its dawn and sunset, its winds and waters, and shuts himself in a monastery which has a back garden, a pond, and some ducks. There is only one deadly sin—to deny life, as Nietzsche says; carefully to pull up all the weeds in one's garden, but to plant there neither flower nor tree—and this is what '*Parsifal*' glorifies and advocates.

"And the idea being what it is, it follows that the play, after the drama once commences, is not only immoral, but also dispiriting and boring, and, to my thinking, inconsequential and pointless. The first act, the exposition, is from beginning to end magnificent; never were the lines on which a drama was to develop more gorgeously, or in more masterly fashion, set forth. Had Wagner seen that *Amfortas* was merely a hypochondriac, a stage Schopenhauer, imagining all manner of wounds and evils where no wounds or evils existed; had he made *Parsifal* a *Siegfried*, and sent him out into the world to learn this, and brought him back to break up the monastery, to set *Amfortas* and the knights to some useful labor, and to tell them that the sacred spear, like *Wotan's* spear, had power to hurt only those who feared it, then we might have

had an adequate working out of so noble a beginning.

"Instead of this, *Kundry* kisses *Parsifal*, *Parsifal* squeals, and we see him in a moment to be only an *Amfortas* who has had the luck not to stumble; and he, the poor fool, who is filled with so vast a pity because he sees—what are called—good and evil in entirely wrong proportion, as, in fact, a hypochondriac sees them—he, *Parsifal*, this thin-blooded inheritor of rickets and an exhausted physical frame, is called the Redeemer, and becomes head of the Brotherhood of the Grail. Beside this inconsequence, all other inconsequences seem as nothing. One might ask, for instance, how, seeing that no man can save his brother's soul, *Parsifal* saves the soul of *Amfortas*? This is a fallacy that held Wagner all his life.

"*'Parsifal'* is commonly treated with respect as a Christian drama—a superior 'Sign of the Cross.' I happen, oddly enough, to know the four Gospels exceedingly well; and I find nothing of '*Parsifal*' in them. It is much nearer to Buddhism in spirit, in color; it is a kind of Germanized metaphysical Buddhism. Schopenhauer, not Christ, is the hero; and Schopenhauer was only a decrepit *Mephistopheles*, bereft of his humor and inverted creative energy.

"There is much glorious music in the last act; the 'Good Friday' music is divine; the last scene is gorgeously led up to; and the music of it, considered only as music, is unsurpassable. But heard at the end of a drama so gigantically planned as '*Parsifal*,' it is unsatisfying and disappointing. It is to me as if the '*Ring*' had closed on the music of '*Neid-Höhle*' with the squabbings of *Alberich* and *Mime*. The powers that make for evil and destruction have won; one knows that *Parsifal* is eternally damned; he has listened and succumbed, even as Wagner himself did, to the Eastern sirens' song of the ease and delight of a life of slothful renunciation, self-abnegation, and devotion to 'duty.' The music of the last scene sings that song in tones of infinite sweetness, but it cannot satisfy

you; you turn from the enchanted hall, with its holy cup and spear and dove, its mystic voices in the heights, its heavy, depressing, incense-laden atmosphere; and you hasten into the night, where the winds blow fresh through the black trees, and the stars shine calmly in the deep sky, just as though no '*Parsifal*' had been written."

After so much quotation, there is little need for me to add my say. To me, however, it seems that one great fault of the philosophy of "*Parsifal*" has not been emphasized, and that is: The hero of this immense work is a fool, and we are told that our salvation lies in the hands of a fool; as the hero must wait for a fool to save him, so must we. This opera is a cathedral built to celebrate the glory of foolishness.

If the work were meant merely as a fairy story, like "*Der Freischütz*," we need not take the libretto seriously. But it is put forward as philosophy and as true religion. Therefore, I feel justified in calling the text and all its crazy quilt of nursery magic false, futile, odious; it would be also deadly dangerous if it were ever accepted as it was meant.

But fortunately, while this huge structure was building, Pasteur and Lister and scientists of that stamp were publishing the blessed life-saving, health-saving, pain-saving results of wisdom, of indefatigable research, and of enlightenment.

Fools, whether pure-hearted or not, are to be pitied, not adored; educated and governed rather than celebrated and crowned. The monstrous fallacy of fool-worship at the core of Wagner's libretto vitiates the whole work for me, and has prevented my spontaneous reverence for either text or music.

And yet a work which has moved so many people, learned and lay, to such solemn rapture, has a greatness beyond any individual's power to kill it with denial. And, in any case, my reverence for the great things Wagner has done elsewhere, and for many glorious details of this work, moves me to forgive him "*Parsifal*."



The Confessions of a Stenographer

By Anne O'Hagan

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

II.

DECEMBER 5: I am an ungrateful beast, I suppose. I ought to be down on my graceless knees thanking fortune that I have a chance to turn an honest extra penny or two in the evenings, especially now that Christmas is coming on and that my New York acclimated eyes can scarcely stand my winter suit any longer; instead of which I am feeling bitter because some one cares so much about June Flower! But I never go to give that "promising young poet" my society—at one dollar an hour—without sourly contrasting her lot and mine.

In the first place she can pose as something of a beauty, and the best I can do is to appear a nice-looking, wholesome young woman. Of course, I don't care for her style! She looks to me as if a vigorous buffeting with outdoor things would improve her. And tousled hair may be as artistic as you please, but I'm blessed if it's tidy! I like nice, shining, well-brushed locks! And a pale, camellia-like complexion is all very well, but it suggests indigestion and too much fried food, to my mind. But then I know I'm plain jealous of her, and that's all there is to it!

And in the second place she has her

"gift," whereas I have only my labor to look to for a living. However, I think stenography is better paid than poetry. I guess she must have some income besides what her "gift" brings in. Otherwise she couldn't afford that tower room in the Van Rensselaer, overlooking the Park. You have to climb a good many stairs to get to it, but it is pretty when you get there, to look out across the fine tracery of branches in the Park, and to see the city glittering frostily beyond, and the sky glittering frostily above. June Flower—I am always possessed to say the whole of her silly name—says that she would not endure the pent-up life of the stony city except for her Park. *Her Park*, indeed!

Her room is pretty, too, with dull mahogany red colors and bronzy greens. She has lots of books—but I discovered once that the dust is so thick upon them as to argue that she doesn't wear them out reading!—and some old engravings and etchings which I have heard one or two of her callers rave about, and some old hammered copper. There are always flowers there—thanks to Dirkman Fletcher! And I think it is thanks to him, too, that there is candy on the tea table, and a particularly wonderful sort



In the first place she can pose as something of a beauty, and the best I can do is to appear a nice-looking, wholesome young woman.

of tea in the caddy, and often a basket of fruit on the stand. It is the queerest infatuation, that of his; here he is, primarily a hustling young business man, an athlete, a clear-cut, hearty sort of person; and there she is, a languid poseuse, who keeps her room close with the smell of flowers and sandalwood and joss sticks; who hates to walk, and couldn't if she wanted to, she wears such high heels; who feels immensely superior to business, and patronizes Mr. Fletcher because he is what she playfully calls a "money grubber." I know a good deal about her manner, for two or three evenings I have been there banging the typewriter when he has come to pay her a visit or to take her somewhere. After a minute or two, on these occasions she bundles me into the alcove which is her bedroom; but she and her guest become merely invisible, not inaudible, by the process.

When Mr. Rodman Priestley comes she sends me home. She has always said that she would pay me for a full hour's work whenever it was she who spoiled the evening's task. I have said, of course, that there was no need of that—I would make it up another time. However, as she hasn't paid at all yet, I dare say it won't inconvenience her greatly to be generous when she does.

Mr. Priestley is a fellow poet. He is English, and his accent is like what I imagine a London fog to be. He is rather short, quite slight, very blond and thoroughly unwholesome-looking. I have seen some of his things in the magazines. I dare say they are very good. They surely are not so sloppy as the work of Miss Flower which I am copying. I'd give a doughnut to hear what Jimmie would think of it! Jimmie has no use for anything which you can't understand. I don't believe any

one, including Miss June Flower, has the very faintest idea of what she means by what she writes. So they pretend to admire it, a lot of them, and call it "so subtle."

I hope she'll pay me soon; it's ten evenings now—ten dollars; for, although I have been bundled home nights when Mr. Priestley came, I have been kept late other times. It isn't always poetry, either. The lazy little creature actually dictates her letters home—her people seem to live in Wisconsin. Sometimes she gets me to handwrite notes for her—she lying curled up like a kitten in her cushions meanwhile, and smoking cigarettes.

December 15: No money yet—and I have been counting on it for all my presents. I hate to have to buy everything on Christmas Eve night. I shall have to ask her for it—and how I hate that! Especially when she is a friend of Mr. Fletcher—he is so kind and friendly to me in the office. He got Mrs. Benthorn a vacation of two weeks on full salary after he heard my tale of her illness. She came back looking so much better, and grateful to me instead of to him.

Let's see. If I get fifteen dollars from Miss Flower, I can buy Jimmie a new bathrobe; there are some marked-down ones on Twenty-third Street. Mother shall have a new silk waist, Aunt Miranda her annual tribute of handkerchiefs. I think I'd like to give dear old Mrs. Bleeker a little eight-cent fern for her room—I saw some on Sixth Avenue the other day. And Doctor Mabel has been such good fun in her queer, freaky way that I'd like to give her a little jokey present—and poor Mrs. Benthorn.

December 16: Well, I asked her—and that is all the good it did me. She smiled at me and shook her untidy head and said: "Dear me, Miss Eldridge, you have found me out—I'm absolutely no good at all at business. How much do you say I owe you? Oh, dear me! So much as that? Of course I know that you're quite sure; you've kept count, no doubt, and I never do—I don't pretend to be methodical. It wouldn't be any

use if I did. Well, you shall certainly have your money if I have that much. Let's see—here's my purse. Sixty-three cents! Not much good to you, that, is it? Now let's look at my check book—not that that's likely to be much help—I always add wrong, and I couldn't begin to tell you how often I've overdrawn. Well—since you're so patient—" for I had been interrupting her like a fool, to say that it really didn't matter, for her please not to worry, and a lot like that. She looked with a sort of impersonal interest at her stubs, though, asked me if seventeen-twenty-three and six-ninety made twenty-four-ninety-three or twenty-four-eighty-three, and then laughed a little affected laugh she has, and said: "Well, it's better that you are able to let me off a little longer, for I am sorry to say that I have only two dollars and a few cents there. Never mind—I always get a Christmas check from home, and I'll settle with you then—if that isn't inconvenient for you!" I murmured miserably that it was all right, although I wanted to cry about it. I've been counting so on that for my Christmas money!

December 17: Mr. Petersen called me into his office to-day to take notes of a talk he and the members of his department were having. It came out why they are so anxious to get hold of Mrs. Bleeker's Baylawns down at Huntington. It seems that it is in the probable route of a new spur the railroad is going to build to the Sound. The Meyer-Grimson people want to get hold of it to sell it again to the railroad at about seven times as much as they pay for it.

"But the route isn't settled yet," said Whitaker, one of the men. "I was told only yesterday by Harvey, of the construction engineering department of the Pennsylvania, that it might go out this way." And he indicated something on a big map they had spread before them.

"Very true. Our own man, Wise, told us as much," said Mr. Petersen, who likes to impress all his subordinates with the idea that all their best suggestions are stale to him, and all their news old. "But we could not buy an inch

along that route for love or money. The MacNaughton-Pierce company have bought up every rod, and naturally they're not going to sell out to us a chance to squeeze the Pennsylvania. Our only hope is that the railroad may decide on the Baylawns route and that we may have it in our possession when the decision is made. If I were sure of either one thing or the other, it would be all right. If it were certain that the railroad would build that spur via Baylawns, I'd make the old lady an offer that she simply couldn't withstand. Or if the old lady would sell now at a reasonable figure, I think I could fix up the engineers' report so that the Pennsylvania would be obliged to select the Baylawns route."

I suppose I looked a little bewildered, in spite of my absorption with my notes. For while some of the men nodded understandingly, Mr. Petersen smiled his ugly smile at me and said:

"See how dazed our able secretary seems. Are you puzzled as to how I can influence the report of the engineers of the railroad, Miss Eldridge?"

Every one looked at me and laughed, and Mr. Petersen jingled the change in his pocket with a meaning sneer on his face—whether directed at me or the engineers I couldn't tell. Then they gave up quizzing me and talked business. Only I thought that a frown did not leave Dirkman Fletcher's face during all the rest of the conference. Later on I made out what Mr. Petersen's plans were; the Wise to whom he had referred seemed to be one of the engineers of the railroad company who were making an investigation of the two routes. But he also seemed to be a stockholder in the Meyer-Grimson Realty and Development Company, and to own a tract which they were about to undertake the development of. I did not discover that any more tangible bribe was to be offered to him than was implicated in his having interests practically one with ours.

After the meeting Mr. Petersen told me to wait for a few minutes. He had some individual dictation for me, he said. I waited, and he was very busy

over some papers on his desk for a while—he loves to keep every one waiting whom he dares. For pure deviltry, I sometimes think, he arranges that long lines of people shall sit for hours in the halls and reception rooms, waiting a chance to explain to him why they cannot meet their payments on their poor, little "own-your-own-homes" contracts; and all of the staff has to wait for him all the time. Only Mr. Meyer and Mr. Grimson ever induce him to hurry—and they are at the office comparatively little. Mr. Meyer is the company's biggest backer, but he is a banker and a director in a thousand things, so that he can't give a great deal of time to this one enterprise. And they say that Mr. Grimson has so much more money than he ever had before in his life that it's gone to his head, and he is playing the fashionable gentleman as hard as he can.

Well, in good time Mr. Petersen turned to me and fixed me with his sharp, twinkling eyes—I am quite sure that if Mr. Petersen were going to kill you, he'd do it with a twinkle in the depths of those blue, beetling-browed eyes, but it isn't a twinkle of merriment. It is sardonic, devilish, like the smile that distorts his cold face now and then.

"Did I happen to mention to you, Miss Eldridge," he said, "when you were hired, what our first requisite in stenographers was?"

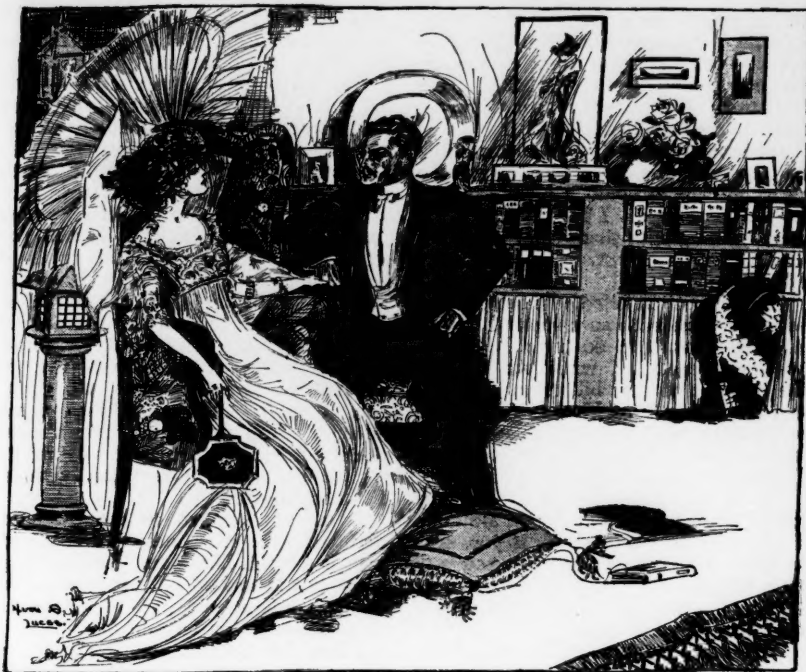
I said, stumbingly, for he always rattles me, that I couldn't remember.

"Well, listen now and remember: No leaking, Miss Eldridge, no leaking! That is the first rule of a good stenographer. And it is an essential here!"

I said that I recalled now that something had been said on the subject, and that I was not in the habit of talking, even if I had any one interested to hear about the details of my business.

"That was one of your credentials," he said, "your loneliness. Well, remember your watchword. No leaks, Miss Eldridge, no leaks!"

Now I was perfectly aware that if I went out and told everything I knew about the Meyer-Grimson Realty and Development Company, nothing worse



It is the queerest infatuation, that of his.

could befall me than a summary dismissal. But Mr. Petersen was so completely the master of the art of intimidation that I felt positively scared as I left him. I imagine it must be a valuable trait in an employer.

In the outer office where my own desk is, Mr. Fletcher was waiting. The frowning, worried look he had worn at the conference seemed deeper. He was engaged in snapping my scissors open and shut.

"May I have a word or two with you?" he asked. I allowed that he might. But the words didn't seem to come. I began to have a thick sort of feeling in my throat and chest and a sort of goneness in my knees. I thought that maybe he was going to ask me to go out to dinner with him, and I don't know why the idea made me dizzy, but it did.

However, after he had snapped my shears for a while and had turned red and had looked out at our unparalleled view of roofs stretching southward, he pulled himself together, and laughed.

"I'm not cut out for diplomacy," he said. "I guess I'll have to plunge right in, feet foremost. Miss Eldridge, Miss Flower tells me—that she hasn't paid you."

I was astonished. Somehow I hadn't thought of that as a thing that Miss Flower would be likely to mention.

"Why—er—why—you see, I never gave her any bill until——"

"Oh, yes, I understand. And meantime she has gone and spent all her money on Christmas gifts." He smiled as if it were a sweet and cunning thing for her to do. "She's a bad business woman, I'm afraid." Again he wore that fatuous smile of a man in love. Of

all the idiots they are the very most imbecile! "Now—what I'm trying to get at—you see—you went to her on my suggestion; you probably have Christmas gifts of your own to buy—and—I feel responsible——"

He broke off, looking as red and miserable as any one I ever saw. I was too angry to help him out. I merely looked at him very hard. I felt that my eyes were burning with shame and rage, and that my face was hot. The idea of his offering me money!

"Now, see!" he cried. "You're angry with me—I'm such an awkward duffer. All that I want to do is to make you my confederate. I want you to take the amount of that bill from me now, and then when Miss Flower settles with you—don't say anything to her about it, you know—but just give it to me. Is that so horrible a proposition?"

"It is probably meant to be very kind," I retorted quite politely, although I was furious. "However, if you wish to lend Miss Flower money, you will have to discuss it with her. If you wish to lend me money—I must thank you and decline your offer."

"Now, I have done it!" he said, looking so comically upset that I could scarcely keep from smiling, in spite of my anger. "You see what it is, Miss Eldridge, for a man to act on his own initiative. If I had only waited for my sister or some one to instruct me in the niceties of feminine intercourse, I might have realized that you would feel insulted by a proposition I could have made to a man in the same case without his getting on his ear. However, if you won't, you won't, and there's an end on it. But I didn't mean any harm."

I was thinking bitterly to myself that he hadn't made the offer of a loan to Miss Flower, in spite of his lack of knowledge of "the niceties of feminine intercourse."

"You probably mean to be kind, as I said before," said I stiffly. "But I don't believe your kindness would have taken exactly the same form of expression with Miss Flower." He turned quite red again, and looked at me slowly.

"I guess I have muffed it this time," he answered. "But you're mistaken if you think that because you are employed here—because you are— Oh, hang it all! because you're what they call a working girl—I would treat you any differently from—any one else. To tell you the truth"—and he smiled again that tender, fatuous smile—"she's such a spendthrift, unbusiness-like young person that I thought if I wanted you to have the money for Christmas, it would be safer to ask you to accept the advance than her. For she'd be as likely as not to blow it in on a pair of satin mules, or a back comb, or something, by night, as to have sent it to its destination. She's a poet, all right! She doesn't know anything about money!" And you'd think, from the expression on his face, that he was ascribing to her all the Christian virtues! I almost snorted.

It never occurred to me until to-night that the unbusiness-like poet person had told Dirkman Fletcher that story of my unpaid bill hoping that he would settle it for her. I don't put such a calculation beyond her.

December 18: Mr. Peterson informed me to-day that they had just noticed that my address was the same as Mrs. Bleecker's. He told me that if I could induce her to sell Baylawns for ten thousand dollars I could have a five per cent. commission; and that if I could induce her to sell it for fifteen thousand dollars I could have a three per cent. commission. I couldn't help laughing. I know their usual commission for such work is ten per cent.

"It amuses you?" said Mr. Petersen, making his bushy eyebrows into a spiral twist and twinkling malevolently upon me.

"You see," I explained, "I've just copied the letter to Mr. Blait enclosing the check for his commission in getting the Heppelwhite place."

"Humph! But you're a member of our staff, my dear young lady. Our interests should be yours. Any little bonus we may feel like making to you for any little extra service you may render us, is so much velvet to you. Mr.

Blait is in no way connected with this office—owes it no loyalty.”

“Well,” I replied, “there’s no use our getting excited about it, for I don’t mean to try for your commission anyway. Mrs. Bleecker has been very sweet and kind to me since I met her, and if the Pennsylvania has got to pay thirty or forty thousand for her place, I’d rather it paid her than—any one else. Anyway, I don’t want to make any money off her. I don’t mean to tell her to stick out for the real value of her place,” I added. “I don’t mean to work against the office, of course. But neither do I want to have anything to do with inducing her to sell.”

“You’re a pretty damned independent young woman at eighteen dollars a week, aren’t you?” said Mr. Petersen. “Take care that you don’t get unhealthily so.”

I am sure I don’t know why I spoke to him like that. I suppose it’s because I’m so tired of having them all think that a little money can buy everything on earth. I’m getting to be almost as unbusiness-like as the poet lady. But before I went home this evening I had my reward. Dirkman Fletcher came and stood looking down at me at my desk.

“So,” he said, “money has no charms for you, no matter how it’s offered?” But he laughed as he said it—such a warm, pleased laugh, as though the thought of me and my folly was good to him. And oh, it did make my heart happy to hear him. I couldn’t say anything—but only get hot and laugh in a sort of embarrassed way.

“Of course,” went on Mr. Fletcher apologetically, “the business of a realty company is to get land at as low a price as possible.”

“Of course,” I assented.

“And none of this Long Island property would be valuable except for what the development companies have done in improving the surrounding land.”

“Of course,” said I again, “I know we’re philanthropists. And it’s our sewers and electric lights and sidewalks at Homehurst which have made Long

Island land valuable—not the East River bridges and tunnels at all.”

“I shan’t argue with you, for you’d probably turn out to be a Socialist in disguise. And I wish we could get hold of Baylawns at a reasonable figure, though I’m glad you’re not going to try to persuade the old lady.”

“A reasonable figure!” I cried. “That’s what makes me so sick with the whole business—you aren’t willing to pay a reasonable figure. You’re not willing to accept merely a reasonable profit upon your investment—no five or six or even eight or ten per cents for you! No—two or three hundred per cent. is what you want and what you’re working to get. Poor old Mrs. Bleecker is such a dear, sentimental soul that she probably wouldn’t sell at any price—even if you did offer her thirty thousand dollars and sell the next week to the railroad for fifty. But even if she would you wouldn’t offer that fair sum to her—”

“Look here, my excited young friend,” interrupted he. “I’m not the Meyer-Grimson Realty and Development Company—I only wish I were. I’m merely a poor young man working for the company at a modest stipend per annum, and a beggarly commission. So don’t accuse me of all the real estate crimes on the calendar.”

It was half-past five, and the office was nearly empty. Just as I was about to tell him that I had used “you” in an entirely impersonal sense, Mrs. Ben-thorn stood at the door, with her hat and coat on.

“I beg your pardon,” she said, “I thought that perhaps you were ready to leave now, and that perhaps we could go out together.”

There was a queer, excited look on her face. I saw that she had something she wanted to say to me—she has quite warmed up and humanized toward me. So we made our good nights to Mr. Fletcher, and went out together. She dragged me over to Madison Avenue, because she wanted to talk, she said, and that was the only place in the city where two walkers could hear each other’s voices. So we dashed across



"You're a pretty independent young woman at eighteen dollars a week, aren't you?"

the Avenue, all a tangle and a glitter and a glow in the late afternoon, with silvery electric lights shining through the dusky lilac-y color that comes just at the edge of the day, and stores all radiant and equipages all glorious—oh, it makes me feel partly like a poet and partly like a spendthrift, Fifth Avenue, when the people are driving and walking home to their dinners and the last of the shoppers are trailing out of the shops! It's so beautiful and sumptuous and alive—and oh, how I want to spend money! How I want to trail expensive furs off my shoulders! How I want to be handed into lovely-lined limousines! How I want to come marching down the street in the correctest of tailor-made clothes with a week's board

pinned to my coat lapel in the shape of gardenias! Or how I want some one of my own to walk through all the light and richness and press of the street, and feel it with me—Jimmie—or some one!

However, it was to Madison Avenue that Mrs. Benthorn haled me to-day. Once she took hold of my arm and I could feel the excitement of her own body tingling through her shabby gloves and my shabby coat sleeve to me.

"My dear, do tell me what it is," I cried when we were on Madison Avenue. "I know there's something the matter."

She dived into the rubbed little shopping bag she carries, and handed me a long newspaper clipping. I thought, with fear, that it would contain an ac-

count of some atrocity that her husband had committed. I knew that she had not seen him since the time I had been to her house. But the clipping was not about him. Instead it was about some surgical experiment of a great New York surgeon. I stared at her, after I had read the headline.

"Why——" I began, but she interrupted me with an impatience most unlike her.

"Oh, read it, read it!" she cried. "Don't talk! Read it!"

Bewildered, I turned back to the clipping. Still bewildered, I read an account of how the famous Doctor Eversley, chief of the visiting staff of the Congregationalist Hospital, fellow of this and that society, associate in these others, etc., etc., had performed a very delicate operation on the skull of a man who had been injured in an accident a few years ago—and then my eyes ran ahead quickly and I saw! For the man, after the accident, had changed from a good, decent, home-loving citizen, an honest and faithful employee of an old-fashioned business house, into a domestic brute and a business sharp. His wife had finally been obliged to leave him for very fear of her life; his employers had been obliged to discharge him after having overlooked various small dishonesties. Finally, after sinking rapidly lower and lower, he had been brought to the Congregationalist one night, injured in a low barroom fight.

A letter with his wife's address on it was the only mark of identification about him, so the hospital authorities notified the woman of his condition, and she came. Weeping, she told the nurse and the young hospital doctor of the dreadful change in her husband of which this accident was the final outcome. The young doctor seemed impressed, sent for the great surgeon and told him he thought they had a case upon which the great surgeon might try out a certain theory. The wife was told the great doctor's theory—that much crime and seeming natural tendency to evil are due to an improper pressure somewhere in the nerve cen-

tres. Her husband's case seemed almost to prove this, as it was an accident, with probable derangement of the adjustment between various nerves, which had marked the beginning of a perversion of his entire nature.

Doctor Eversley would like to experiment. Would the wife give permission? She wept and shuddered. It seemed so dreadful, she said; were not human beings, then, as God made them; and who were doctors, to experiment upon God's work? But finally Doctor Eversley persuaded her that there was less impiety in the effort to restore a man to that Image in which he was supposed to have been made, than to let an accident—a bone or nerve astray—ruin him. She gave her permission.

And then, marvelous things were done with X rays, dislocation was somewhere discovered at the back of the neck, delicate—oh, most delicate and fearsome—operations were performed, and one day the roisterer and thief and blackguard of the past two years opened mild, faithful, patient eyes upon the nurse and his wife. He seemed not to realize at first where he was or how he came there. Then some slight explanations were made, and he recalled the barroom brawl, and a look of horror and repugnance crossed his face. From that, he went back recalling all the ugliness of the immediate past. He looked affrightedly at his wife.

"Tell me, my dear," he whispered, "have I been in a delirium lately, or is it true that you—were forced to leave me?"

With streaming eyes, she bowed her head. He closed his own and lay quiet for a while.

"And all those other things I seem to remember—they were true, too?"

She admitted it.

"Have I been mad?" he asked.

They explained to him as much as they could. He asked for Doctor Eversley and when he had seen that great man and had heard from him his theory, he seemed afraid that his seeming cure might be only temporary. Doctor Eversley reassured him. His old employers took him on again for a trial.



I was frightened half to death and, oh, so sorry for her!

His wife returned to him. All this happened six months ago, and so far there has been no indication of a return to his intermediate state of violence. The facts have just been made public. It was a miracle—to raise a man from such a living death as that in which this poor wretch was sunk!

"Well—well?" cried Mrs. Benthorn, in a fever of impatience, as I folded the column again and handed it to her.

Of course, I knew what the poor soul meant. Her husband's evil courses had begun after an accident. That was what had changed him, what had seemed to ruin him, what she blamed as the cause of all her misery. Her father and her people might talk themselves black in the face about his having been

always bad and merely hiding it for a while. She knew better!

"But, my dear," said I pitifully, "my poor dear—even if it is so; even if this miracle could be repeated—don't you see? This man, whose case is described, had to meet with a second accident which rendered him unconscious, which put it beyond him to object to being experimented on—do you see? If he had been perfectly well—or in that apparently perfect health which he had for those two years between the first and second accidents—don't you see? He wouldn't have consented."

She stood quite still in the street and looked at me with her poor face twisting and mouthing. Then she began to cry—such awful crying! Sobs that tore at her chest and strangled her. I was frightened half to death and oh, so sorry, so sorry, for her. I tried to shield her from observation, but it was almost hopeless. A cab came cruising slowly up the street. Despairingly I hailed it, and bundled her into it. I gave my own address—my week's

salary, just drawn, wouldn't have paid cabby's hire out to Thousand-and-Steeneth Street, where she lives. She calmed down a bit before we got to Grove Street, and she came up to my attic, and lay down, and let me bring her up a little dinner. Thank goodness, Mrs. Johnson's food is always wholesome and palatable!

Dear old Mrs. Bleeker, when she heard that I had a sick friend upstairs, insisted upon my carrying up a little of her own sherry to the invalid.

"You won't get any such sherry now," she told me, with a little shake of her head, half dolorous over these degenerate days, half proud of her own better ones. "It is the last of my father's stock."

As I gave it to Mrs. Benthorn and watched her sip at it slowly, and saw a natural color come again into her face under the gentle stimulant, I was suddenly struck by the recollection of those two pictures, so alike, the one in her rooms and the one in that of the kind old giver of the wine. It gave me a funny little feeling, like a gasp.

After she had gone—I took her to the elevated station and put her aboard the train, with her poor newspaper clipping folded tight and stuck into the palm of her glove—I kept on thinking about it. And it sticks in my mind now, as though it really meant something!

December 20: Life has been rather dull for a day or two—I suppose it always seems so immediately after a tempest, like poor Mrs. Benthorn's. Doctor Mabel Bickford took me to a "Parlor Socialist" meeting one night, and it was funny in a way. There were some ministers and some writers and some social reformers, and a real, East Side, simon-pure Socialist who got mad with all the others. And there was a very rich and very lovely lady who can be in her box at the opera every night when the opera is sung, having her jewels described and her costumes written up; but who is being, just at present, a public-spirited citizen. She moves like a goddess, and she wears clothes that would make any goddess in the whole Olympian bunch forswear her goddess-ship and come hustling down to earth and to the French shops.

And—oh, it was funny and it was sad and it was contemptible, I suppose, and it was very, very natural—but you should have seen how every man, woman and child of the circle was visibly affected by the millionairess' presence. Not by her beauty, for there were awfully pretty women there besides, who were interrupted and squelched and laughed at and combated. Not by her brains, for, while I'll not say she's a fool, she is plainly a faddist, and half the people there were her intellectual superiors. But by her husband's millions! Even the simon-pure, East Side article had to let them affect him—though he adopted his own method of

showing the effect. He was rude to her, and explained to her that he took off his hat to no one's money bags, and made a personal affair of the meeting by insisting that he would rejoice when her husband's holdings were confiscated by the State. She smiled sweetly, and answered with a good deal of tact. I wonder if she'd be a Socialist if the State did confiscate her husband's business. Or if the others would kotow to her then. Heigh-ho!

December 21: One by one, we clerks and stenographers and such small fry were summoned into the Presence today. That's what Hattie Lawlor calls Mr. Petersen now. Hattie is giving her tongue free rein these days because she is going to be married in February and is going to give up work. She has chosen February because of the January sales.

"I could never afford the linen for housekeeping," she explains airily, "if I had to buy towels and pillow cases and all at the regular prices."

Her engagement is a secret which I don't think more than twenty or thirty people know.

However, as I was saying, we were summoned one by one into the Presence. I had no notion of what was going on, and I was full of curiosity. But not one of the wretched creatures who were called in first would gratify it as they came marching out of Mr. Petersen's sanctum, although they mostly wore broad grins. I was the very last person to be summoned. My desk telephone rang, and Mr. Petersen's voice very gruffly commanded me to enter. I did, and he scowled at me over his bushy eyebrows.

"How long have you been here?" he snapped. I stammered and forgot, and remembered. Then I told him.

"Not an old employee, are you?" he snarled.

"No, Mr. Petersen," said I, swearing inwardly that if I had my own way I'd never be an old employee of his.

"It's our custom to give our old employees some little gift at Christmas, but you—" he stopped. It made me sort of mad to be called in there just to

be told that I was not going to receive a Christmas present. Goodness knows I had not expected any, but it seemed to me that he was going a little out of his way to be nasty.

"I wasn't expecting any present," I announced. "So if you only wanted to tell me that I was not going to receive one I may as well go back to my work."

"So you had," he answered. "Well, take that with you, and read it at your leisure." He handed me an envelope, directed in his own handwriting.

When I got back to my desk I opened it. It was a note to "My dear Miss Eldridge" from "yours very truly, Christen Petersen," who said that the firm wished her to accept a Christmas present of two weeks' salary, and an extra day's holiday. Oh, how ashamed I felt of my abominable ungraciousness! How happy and delighted I was! I rushed to the door of Mr. Petersen's room, knocked, opened it before he had growled out his "Come in," and thanked him "a thousand, thousand times."

He received my thanks as grumpily as possible. Now, isn't he a wonder?

I was a little sorry to hear from Hattie Lawlor that the others had got only one week's salary. Fortunately, I had not told what a great bonanza mine had been.

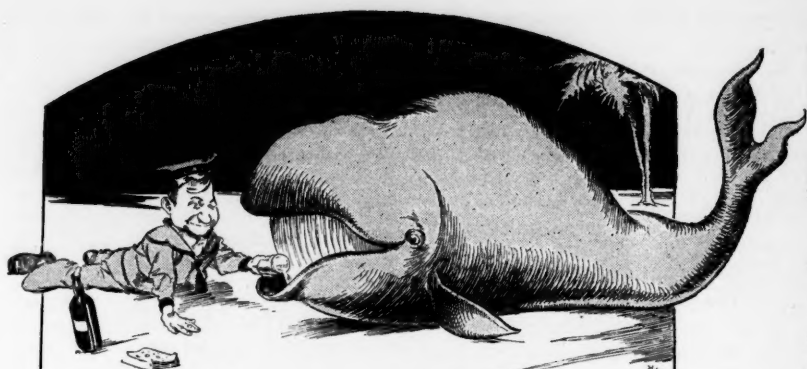
To-night I have been breaking every

rule of the good people who tell you to do your Christmas shopping early. I was out from seven until ten! I have got Jimmie the dandiest terry bathrobe for four-fifty, and mother a simply scrumptious waist for ten—reduced from eighteen-fifty, the girl said, and I believe it; it's worth all of that, with a dear little yoke of hand work and Cluny. And Aunt Miranda's handkerchiefs are four-dollar ones, with the cunningest "M" in the corners. And I'm going to get Mrs. Bleecker a nice fern—not an eight-center. And I got Mrs. Benthorn a pair of gloves, and Doctor Mabel a jar of Oriental preserves—she loves them and you can get awfully cunning, East-Indian-y looking ones for a quarter. That will leave me enough to get over to Boston on.

Thank goodness, Christmas comes on Monday! I shall take that five-three train on Saturday and have Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday at home. I'd come back on the midnight Tuesday, if I could afford a sleeper, but I can't, so I'll take the five-three back again from Boston. Oh, I didn't believe it was possible for any one to be so suddenly lifted out of the dumps as I am. Oh, and I'm going to subscribe two dollars instead of one to Hattie Lawlor's wedding present. All the Meyer-Grimson women have clubbed to give her a half dozen of each of the flat-silver articles!

TO BE CONTINUED.





ALEXANDER, A WHALE

by WALLACE IRWIN

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

WHEN ye treat 'em soft and kind
Whales is gentle and refined,
Jest like kittens, and they gets
To be perfect little pets.

Whales is always bein' jabbed,
Chased and badgered, stung and stabbed
By each oil-pursuin' lubber
Out in search o' bone and blubber;

Yet the whale, when let alone,
Has the sweetest temper known,
And I think with fond regret
Of some whales that I have met.

Once when I was wrecked in Guam
I was settin' 'neath a palm
Eatin' cheese and drinkin' beer
When a whale I noticed near.

First he kind o' sauntered by
Lookin' kittenish and shy,
Spoutin' forty feet o' spray
In a saucy sort o' way.

First I coaxed 'im with a crumb
From a sandwich on me thumb.
This he nibbled, half in fright,
Smacked 'is lips in huge delight.

Then I gave 'im wetter cheer
From a half a glass o' beer;
And before the daylight's end
Alexander was me friend.

Friendship, stranger, grows apace,
Countin' neither time nor place;
And there's nothin' small nor frail
In the friendship of a whale.

Every morn at half-past nine
Alec rose from out the brine,
Nestled cozy at me side
Where our breakfast we'd divide.

Hours and hours I'd set and smoke
Tellin' Alec many a joke.
Alec thought me wit immense,
Though his hide was rather dense.

Oft amidst the seagulls' screech
We would gambol on the beach,
Alec kickin' up the sea
Like a typhoon on a spree.

But one morn when I arose,
Pattin' Alec on the nose,
I discovered—lack-a-wo—
That me food was gettin' low.

For you'll doubtless all agree
That a nawful strain it be
When a shipwrecked sailor hale
Has to feed a growin' whale.

So I stroked poor Alec's chin,
And I gently held his fin,
And I says: "Its sure a sin
Sordid facts should thus creep in.

"But—don't think me impolite—
You've a nawful appetite,
And it might be quite a while
Ere I'm rescued from this isle."

Alexander, with a throb,
First began to sigh and sob;
And, Great Grief, that critter smit
Like a earthquake in a fit.

With a beller like a lubber
And a reg'lar whalish blubber,
With a wholesale whoop and howl
And a subterranean growl—

Then from out his mighty snout
Soon he spouted such a spout
That he knocked me, free and fair,
Forty fathoms in the air.

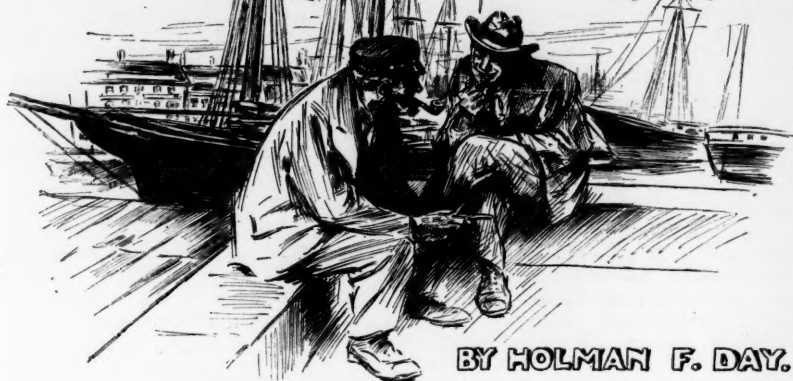
So I flew, both fast and free,
Seven hours above the sea;
And at last I flitted down
On the schooner *Nancy Brown*.

So I told me tale to them,
And the captain said: "Ahem!"
While the mate jest winked at me,
And the bos'n said: "Tee-hee!"

For it's thus they always act
When a feller sticks to fact;
And Suspicion's pizen tooth
Bites the bloke what tells the Truth!



THE SEVEN SKIPPERS OF THE "LONDON LASS".



BY HOLMAN F. DAY.

ILLUSTRATED BY CH. GRUNWALD

THE May term of court in Cuxabexis County dragged its slow coils of litigation over into June. Sheriff Sproul dozed daytimes in the hot and humid atmosphere of the stuffy courtroom and kept vigil nights to guard the deliberations of refractory juries. When he could keep awake in the courtroom he glowered on judge, lawyers, and jurymen. The somnolent drone of voices got on his nerves. There wasn't a case in the whole term with ginger enough in it to keep a man interested five minutes at a stretch. If the sheriff, gasping for fresh air, pulled down an upper window sash, some peevish old juror or lawyer would pipe a complaint about a draught.

Occasionally, at recess, the sheriff stumped to and fro in the walled yard of the jail, gulping down fresh air, and voiced his feelings to his friend, Hiram Look. Familiarity with law and its processes had converted the old mariner's ingrained fear of law into disgust.

"Hiram," he said, "I've got patience enough to hold the watch on a ten-yard dash between picked teams of quauhaugs and Scarboro clams—and it

would be swift work compared with what's goin' on up there." He shook his stubby finger at the windows of the courtroom. "But I'm gettin' about to that point where I want to whoop, rise up Williyum Reilly, and throw everything in reach at them fellers up there. I have to set and hold onto my chair."

"It's too slow a place for me to loaf in," declared Hiram. "What's the case that's on to-day?"

"Hoss case, and that's the seven-teenth one, all growin' out of swaps at that Seventh Day Advent camp meetin', as near as I can gather. They've been all the forenoon settlin' the point as to where the spavin was on that two-dollar plug that they're fightin' over to-day. 'Did you—er-r-r ah-h-h—notice the—er-r-r ah-h-h-h—swellin' technically known as a—er-r-r-r ah-h-h—wind puff abaft the main gambrel?' asks the lawyer for the plaintiff. 'I object,' says the lawyer for the defense. 'State ground of objection,' says old Four-eyes on the bench. 'May it please the court——' and he talks for half an hour. 'Objections overruled,' says Four-eyes, after t'other lawyer

has talked a half hour, too. 'Please note exceptions,' says lawyer for defense. Then lawyer for plaintiff goes on and asks same question and somehow they manage to get into another fight over it. Law, Hiram! Talk about slow doin's! I'd sooner take a job to scull a loaf of brown bread acrost a puddle of Porty Reek molasses in January. I can stand life on shore pretty well, give me air enough. But, by biscuit, after six weeks of this I'm gettin' hungry for more outdoors than you can get standin' on dirt. I'd give a hundred dollars for an hour right now on the quarter-deck of the *Jefferson P. Benn*."

"Sheriffin' is tedious business in court time—there ain't any doubt about it," agreed his friend.

The ex-skipper glared up at the dusty windows of the courtroom. Then he shook his fist at them.

"All shet tight, and about twenty old buzz bugs stinkin' it up to a hundred and ten in the shade," he growled. And then the clang of the bell in the tower summoned him back to his duties.

For the last few days of the term, when he looked about the courtroom, his gaze was fairly malevolent. He eyed the bald heads of the jury seats with his gavel poised as though he would like to play a tattoo on those bland expanses. When he announced "the honorable court," he gave a bang on his little desk that brought out the dust, and the demoniac rasp in his voice made his honor cock a mildly inquiring eye in his direction.

On the last day of court, when final adjournment was announced, the high sheriff fairly burst out of the courtroom.

"Hiram," he grunted, "it ain't no use! Only salt water will dull the edge I've been whettin' onto my disposition. I've got to get down there and get pickled and aired out. I shall be killin' somebody if I don't take care of myself. I'm goin' to appoint you civil deputy for a fortnight and turn the office over to you. I don't know just where I'm goin'. I don't care, so long as it's salt water and plenty of

elbow room. And if any one asks you where I've gone you tell 'em you don't know. You'll be tellin' the truth."

Hiram rubbed his nose reflectively. The spirit of adventure sparkled in the cap'n's eyes. The old showman's soul promptly kindled. The wanderlust smouldered within him always.

"Aaron," he said, "there's deputies enough to keep this jail straight and run the county business. I need a little relaxation myself. I'll go along with you."

"No, you won't," snapped Cap'n Sproul, with great promptitude. "Hiram, for thirty years I was a seafarin' man. Now I've got a sudden and bad relapse. For two weeks I'm goin' to forget that I'm a settled fixture on shore; I ain't goin' to remember that I'm sheriff of a landlocked county. I ain't takin' souvenirs with me—and you're the principal souvenir. I don't want to hurt your feelin's, Hiram, but the fact is if you were along on this trip I couldn't get into the proper state of mind."

"That's a nice way to talk to a friend!" stated the offended Hiram.

"If you're a friend you'll help me out by stayin' here and lookin' sharp after my interests while I am away. Now don't argue with me. I ain't in the right frame of mind. Just two more yips from you and I'll be sayin' things that hurt. You let me go."

The next morning he had gone. The few who were at the early train gazed with curiosity at his single article of baggage—a dingy canvas sailor's bag, stuffed with clothing. He had dug it out of the carefully preserved belongings of his life on the deep, and the thrill of old and precious memories had gone through him when he had packed it, disdaining the new valise that his wife had urged upon him.

"Louada Murilla," he said, "there ain't no dude trip to this. It is a—well, it is a course of treatment I'm takin' to cure myself of something that you don't understand. You'll have to let me alone to operate in my own way."

When he reached the seaport city

for which he had headed with homing pigeon's eagerness, he trudged through side streets toward the water front, carrying his bag and relishing the old sensations. A cab would have spoiled all. A hotel would have taken the edge off the whole experience. He hunted up a sailor's boarding house and, once in his room, stripped himself of the garb of shore and put on the duds of a sailor with feverish haste. Then he canted the peak of his cap down over one eye and sauntered forth.

In the loafing room of the boarding house a veteran accosted him.

"I thought it was you, Cap'n Sproul, when you come in and went upstairs, but I wasn't sure of you in that other rig-out. But I know you now, and how be ye?"

"I'm feelin' better every minute, Cap'n Cook," replied the prodigal, shrugging his shoulders comfortably in his loose jacket. "And when I get down on the end of a wharf, a-settin' on a spile butt and whittlin' a chip, I expect to feel a blame sight better still. Come along and loaf."

Cap'n Cook had a shaven, seamed face in which a mouth was set obliquely; he "yawed" it one way to make a smile, he "yawed" it the opposite way to express disfavor. He beamed on Cap'n Sproul with peculiar amity.

"Such of the boys as is around here will be reel well pleased to see you," he vouchsafed. "There's six of us that sort of loaf together more or less, bein' as how we've all had cross-stickers in our time. There ain't much knowledgable gossip to be got out of these schooner fellers. They're back and forth between a coal port and here in the same old groove of water."

"Nothin' refreshing about 'em at all," agreed Cap'n Sproul. "How long since you've given up the *Jairus P. Witherspoon*?"

"Goin' on four years. I reckoned when I got over sixty-five and didn't have to worry any more about the grocery bill I'd better settle on shore and take it easy. But I vum, Cap'n Sproul, I hanker for a v'yage, now and again,

like a feller that's tryin' to break off from lickin'."

"It gets holt of you once in a while. It gets holt of me," agreed Cap'n Sproul. "It was rheumaticks that drove me ashore—rheumaticks in the back and arms, and when it gets so that you can't fan a belayin' pin—and Portygee sailors to handle—there ain't no particular relish in keepin' to sea."

Cap'n Cook agreed, with a grim twist of his mouth that destroyed his smile.

"Others you speak of all well fixed?" inquired Cap'n Sproul.

"Got a plenty and takin' comfort generally, except when they get restless like I do. But life ain't all sap sugar and sunshine. I suppose you ain't doin' anything except take it easy on the interest, like we are doin'?"

"No—oh, no—only just sort of loafin' around," lied the high sheriff of Cuxabexis clumsily.

"Thought I heard that you'd taken a—a—well, a policeman's job or something of the kind," insisted Cap'n Cook. "It was told to me, but I didn't put much stress on just what kind of a job it was because I didn't take any stock in the yarn. A man with the vessel property you own wouldn't need to keep dogwatch for landlubbers."

"When a seafarin' man settles ashore they seem to like to make up lies about him," suggested Cap'n Sproul indignantly.

He was ashamed to confess to this old seadog, or to have others on the water front know, that he had taken a position that was so far removed from sailormen's traditions. He wanted to consort with them again on the old terms of intimacy and mutual scorn of all that constituted official dignity and authority on shore among the landlubbers.

"Who be the others?" he asked, anxious to change the subject. "I must know 'em, of course."

"Oh, you know 'em, all right. There's Cap'n Theron Doty, Cap'n Oral Kitchen, Cap'n Osney Cole, Cap'n Cass B. Tansom, and Cap'n Barnjum Tewksbury. Most of 'em hang out



The crew assembled aft and smoked and chatted in deep content.

down in Libby's sail loft on a lowery day like this. Let's go find 'em."

Cap'n Aaron Sproul was well received by the men who had in past times shouted greetings to him over the swinging rail in distant seas, and Cap'n Cook volunteered the information that the rumor that he had turned policeman was some landlubber's lie.

"If you had settled on tidewater where you belong, they wouldn't be gettin' up lies about you," observed Cap'n Tansom, whose little eyes seemed a part of the mosaic of his mottled countenance. "Nothin' good comes to a sailorman who goes inland to live."

"Rheumaticks drove me there," explained Cap'n Sproul. "I'll say I've

held town office, because that gave me a chance to keelhaul some of the plowed-ground fellers that hadn't realized that deep-water fellers was dangerous chaps to tackle."

"Let 'em know, did ye, that sea cap'ns ain't the right kind of a sofy cushion to set on?" inquired Tewksbury.

"Them that tried to set on me has looked pretty careful ever since to see where they was settin' down," stated Cap'n Sproul, with vigor. "But say, you fellers, I'm willin' to set up the cigars if you'll come along out. If you'd had to look at nothin' but trees and gable ends so long as I have you'd realize what an appetite I've got for a sight at something with rigin' on it, if it ain't nothin' but a gunlow."

They accompanied him with alacrity.

On the way down Commercial Wharf that stretched its warehouse-laden length into the bay, a group of hurrying men nearly bumped into them. The men carried their dunnage bags and were evidently just off some craft. Cap'n Cole recognized one of them, an elderly man with a querulous face, and accosted him.

The man set down his bag, and the sailors followed suit.

The elderly man was plainly full of his subject and ready to talk at the first suggestion of a question as to what this departure meant.

"He's mate of the *London Lass* out there," explained Cap'n Cole. "Mr. Scriminger, gents."

"'E'll call it desertion, that's what 'e will," stated Mr. Scriminger. "But Hi don't care what 'e calls it—Hi and these men, 'ere. Hi'll stand with 'im. Hi told 'im and 'e wouldn't 'arken to me. Now, blawst 'is bloomin' tripes, 'e can look arter 'imself."

"So says we all," announced the men in uneven chorus.

"It must be grub troubles, mate, see-in' that you're leavin' along with the tar heels," sagely remarked Cap'n Cole, folding his hands upon his ample front.

"Grub troubles it are," corroborated a white-faced man who was plainly the

cook. "Every biscuit has got enough things in it so that it will dance a jig if you'll whistle a tune. As to the rest of the grub, I'm too polite to tell all that ails it. And I'm tryin' to forget it."

"We've left 'im halone with hit," said Mr. Scriminger. "Mebbe 'e'll sail without a crew. Hif the grub can understand horders hit's strong enough to 'oist 'er sails for 'im."

Then, on plea that they were hurrying to catch a train, Mr. Scriminger marshaled his little troop and started off up the wharf at a brisk pace.

"He's probably pretty close on their heels," suggested Cap'n Cook, gazing toward the sea end of the wharf. "I've heard of him before. He's Cap'n Lunn Tackaberry, and he hails from St. John. Brig the *London Lass*. Them Bluenosers generally carries grub that they've bought second hand from a buzzards' roost, but I've heard that the *Lass* gets it nearer to the hoof and closer to the horn than any of the rest of the Province fleet."

"I always fed comf'tably well 'board ship," said Cap'n Sproul, "even if I did hate to see Portygees destroy good vittles. I've heard of old Tackaberry, too. And if what I hear is so I don't blame the men. Is that him?"

A tall, scrawny man was coming hurriedly up the wharf. He flung his arms about as he walked. He had little eyes above the high cheek bones and, when he came up to them, glanced from one to the other without cordiality.

"Left you, have they, cap'n?" inquired Cap'n Tewksbury. His tone did not indicate commiseration.

"Let 'em go," snapped the St. John man. "I don't want the likes of those skeddaddlers aboard my vessel. I'll go to the shippin' office and get new men, and I'll post those fellows so that it will be a long day before they get another berth."

"They was talkin' of takin' a train," stated Cap'n Tewksbury. "I guess you can't bother them much. Well, I wish you luck, cap'n, but men is skerce along the beach here now."

"I can always find men for my ves-

sel," returned the skipper of the English, striding away.

"I'll bet ye sarsaparilla for the crowd that he don't hire a sailor in this port," offered Cap'n Cole. A grin split his broad face. "He'll have to change the name of that brig and put on false whiskers if he finds a crew here. He may be able to fool Islandmen and Scotiamen, but he can't fool Yankees. And to make sure that he don't shenanigan any good men that need honest grub for an honest day's work, let's follow along behind and pass the tip when it's needed. If he's held up here a while it may teach him a lesson on the grub question. He needs it."

Cap'n Tackaberry was not finding satisfaction at the commissioner's office. Men were not available. Those with whom he talked inquired the name of the vessel and growled something and slunk away. The loafers about the door when he came out appeared to have still more definite information regarding his wants and his plight, and returned gruff negatives when he asked if they wanted to hire. One man was bold enough to add to his refusal the inquiry of whether it was true that biscuits occasionally got away on the *Lass* and jumped overboard and swam ashore.

The seven old shipmasters were standing off at one side, with appearance of innocence so bland that no one would have been deceived except the excited Cap'n Tackaberry. He made up to them with his troubles.

"And I only want a crew that will work my vessel from here to St. John where I can hire real men," he declared. "I wouldn't have Yankees, anyway. They're always thinkin' of what they have to eat in this bloomin' country."

"Well, I for one think about it three times a day," confessed Cap'n Sproul, and he added tartly: "But some grub I've heard about in my time would take my thoughts off'm eating mighty sudden."

"Nothin' meant personal by that remark, is there?" demanded Cap'n Tackaberry.

"Not unless remarks made by you was personal. If so, then mine can be applied to fit."

"Say, look here, gents," broke in Cap'n Cook, noting that the situation was getting a bit strained, "something has just occurred to me. It come in a flash, as you might say. Here's a brother skipper in trouble. Vessel is out there light, and he wants her worked to St. John where he can get a crew that—that will fit his wants, so to speak. Now, you listen to me. Now, here's seven of us, all sea captains, with time hangin' kind of heavy, and no weather to be afraid of outside right now in the middle of the summer. Let's lend a hand and work Cap'n Tackaberry's brig acrost for him. It's only a few days, and will make a nice little excursion. And it will be quite a novelty—seven shipmasters goin' before the mast. I'm ready for just such a lark."

For a little while the veterans looked at each other, and then their eyes began slowly to kindle. The hankering for one more toss at sea under canvas came upon them. That queer spirit of comradeship that sends the mass into adventure that the individual would shrink from, obsessed them.

"We'll go," said one after the other hesitatingly. "We'll go," they declared more boldly. Then one or two slapped their thighs and one or two shook hands on it. "We'll go," they pledged in chorus.

"Providin'," broke in Cap'n Cook, "that—and this ain't makin' any reflections on anything or anybody, but is just for compliment to us, seein' that we propose to go free and willin' and for nothin' so far as wages are concerned—providin', I say, that Cap'n Tackaberry goes around to the best market here with us and lets us pick out pantry stuff enough for the trip and pays for it. We go as his guests and do the work before the mast, and he entertains us as shipmasters ought to be entertained. It's a fair stand-off, that's all it is. Cap'n, it's up to you!"

Cap'n Tackaberry was still regarding Cap'n Sproul with disfavor.



The seven veterans landed in a heap like a football scrimmage.

"I suppose I am obliged to accept that offer," he said, "but I don't like certain remarks that have been made. I shall be glad to entertain you aboard my vessel for the trip, but there's one man here that doesn't seem to be as much of a gentleman as the rest of you are. . . And six are enough to work the brig."

"We'll all go or none," stated Cap'n Cook, with much decision.

"Well, come along, then!" The St. John skipper was not cordial.

"He'll apologize for what he just called me," remarked Cap'n Sproul in baleful tones, "before I put foot on his old punk deck."

Cap'n Tackaberry saw that he had overreached. He heard a mumble of approval that indicated that his new friends stood ready to desert him.

"Well, I'll apologize," he grumbled. "I want to get that brig to St. John."

"And you want to invite us to go more cordial," prompted Cap'n Cook. "We ain't got to do this. There ain't anything in it for us except what we eat, and the outin'—and we've got to pay our own railroad fares back home. But that's all right. Howsomever, you've got to act toward us different from this. We ain't a case of the scurvy nor a passul of rats. If you want us aboard you take off your can

as a gent should and say so, polite and soavable."

It was plain that the smile that Cap'n Tackaberry put on hurt his face, and there was agony in his assumed politeness. But his need was critical.

"There," remarked Cap'n Cook, "that's done, even though it ain't very well done. Now we're more or less all ready to go, except for gettin' a few chickle-fixin's from our houses and leavin' word with the wimmen folks. So, first we'll cruise right around to the market and have the grub put up and started down to the wharf."

Ten minutes later, in single file behind the sullen Cap'n Tackaberry, they marched into the city's leading market, cheery smiles lighting their faces as the aroma of the good things caught them at the threshold.

"There's nothin' like havin' foundations laid right," stated Cap'n Cook, who had constituted himself spokesman for the commissariat. "My name ain't Cook for nothin'. I'm goin' to be in charge of the galley for this trip, and you needn't be afraid that you won't have all that's goin', and put together right when it comes to table. For foundations, meat. Let's see, allowin' four days for the trip——"

"It ain't goin' to take any four days," objected the surly skipper of the *Lass*.

"You never can tell in light breezes and summer weather," insisted Cap'n Cook. "And the time to buy meat is when it's in front of you and for sale. You'd feel kind of oncomfortable, wouldn't you, with seven sea captains as guests before the mast, and a calm on and the steak all eat up?"

"I don't think you'd starve to death, even if you had to depend on the food that's aboard now," said the skipper, his gaze boring Cap'n Sproul, as though daring that detractor to say something.

Cap'n Cook set his palm edgewise on a side of beef, rich with juices in the sirloin and yellow with broidity of fat. "Eight slices four times," he commanded the man of the poised knife. "And make 'em thick. We ain't orderin' shoe taps."

The skipper of the brig winced every time the knife sank into the meat. But the watching of the cutting of thirty-two steaks proved tedious for the other onlookers. They were as eager as boys, and their eyes searched for good things.

"Ain't you goin' to have friggasseed chicken once or twice?" inquired Cap'n Cole, fondling his Falstaffian frontage.

"'Twouldn't be no cruise without it," cried Cap'n Cook.

"And ham and eggs every morning for breakfast, of course," put in Cap'n Kitchen, lifting the cover of an egg case.

"Of course," agreed the chief of the pantry.

"Say, look here, my good friends," objected the master of the *Lass*, "I think you're cuttin' it a bit broad, d'ye know. Eggs are something I have never had aboard."

"If you are goin' to hedge as host on what we have to eat," said Cap'n Cook severely, "we might as well know it right now. Here we be, seven retired shipmasters givin' you our valuable services free gratis for nothin', and you makin' a holler on the grub question! Here, butcherman, stop cuttin' steak until we know where we stand."

"Keep on," directed Cap'n Tackaberry faintly. "But it seems as though a lot of this was goin' to spoil."

"Don't you worry about it spoilin'. There's ice and a plenty of it goin' aboard that hooker. It's the ice as will do the business. Our storb'ries and fresh vegetables will——"

"Strawberries?" demanded Cap'n Tackaberry, mustering courage to rebel.

"You don't think, do you, that we're goin' offshore right in the height of the storb'ry season and not have storb'ries and cream to top off the snack?"

"I have plenty of canned vegetables in my own stores aboard," pleaded the skipper, when he saw Cap'n Cook critically inspecting the baskets of fresh peas, the asparagus, the potatoes, and the rest of the appetizing layout.

"Keep 'em there," advised Cap'n

Cook serenely. "They'll be good next winter. But the time to have fresh vegetables is when they're fresh." He ordered liberally, and his mates stood at one side listening gustfully. Then there were butter and the general "fix-in's" and even a rotund dairy cheese.

"You ain't managed nothin' for sweet yet," suggested Cap'n Cole. "Is it goin' to be plum duff?"

"No, sir," replied Cap'n Cook. "It's goin' to be pie three times a day, marble cake, cream puffs, and assorted cookies. We'll tackle the bakery when we go past. Be thinkin' up your choice of pie."

"I only own three-eighths into that brig," protested the St. John man.

"Well, you don't think this little jag of grub that you're buying is goin' to eat up your share in her, do you?" demanded Cap'n Cook. "Say, you're beginnin' to make me good and sick."

"But I mean I've got to explain to the owners," protested the skipper.

"Well, explain that you were hung up here in this port, and freights at this time of year runnin' a dollar seventy-five a ton, and you with a cargo waitin' for you in St. John. Don't you suppose we know what a hole we're gettin' you out of, free gratis for nothin'? You ain't even been cordial to us about it, yet. I'm ready to throw it up. Put the stuff back," he commanded the amazed and indignant marketman.

"I'm orderin' it, and I'll pay for it," declared Cap'n Tackaberry hastily. He began to tug at a fat wallet in his coat pocket.

"Unless you can be pleasant about it, and stay pleasant from now out, we'll call it off," stated Cap'n Cook.

The expression on their host's face was not exactly radiant during the rest of the marketing, but he choked back remonstrance, even when the whole seven claimed particular and different partiality for pie and ordered a fairly staggering stack of pastry. Before sundown the supplies were on board and stowed. The old mariners began leisurely survey of the *London Lass* from forepeak to lazaret.

"With the tide settin' as it is, gents, and this breeze holdin', I don't see any reason why we can't get under way and stand out," suggested Cap'n Tackaberry, who had followed them about, and had been waiting impatiently for them to get busy.

"Don't larrup a free hoss," said Cap'n Cook rebukingly. "There'll be wind to-morrow and water, too. Nothin' gained by owlin' round nights—not at our age. Some of you fellers bring me kindlin's. First thing is a galley fire, and then a supper that will make you dream of the happy land of Canaan."

"I don't see any reason why we can't be sailin' whilst we're eatin'," remonstrated Cap'n Tackaberry, with nasty emphasis on the last word.

"You haven't made enough account of eatin' in times past and gone," said Cap'n Tewksbury. "There's quite a science to it if you're goin' to get the most out of a meal. If we should turn to now and get all het up h'istin' sails, that supper wouldn't taste good—and Lord knows we don't want to pull ropes on full stomachs."

"Well, this is *business* for me—it isn't an excursion party." It was plain that Cap'n Tackaberry's temper was getting away from him.

"It's an excursion party for *us*—that was the understandin'," interposed Cap'n Sproul. "For a man that's been up inshore for several years, like I have, this is a treat. I've been han-kerin' for it. And I'd hate to see the trip spoiled by any one gettin' fussed up over little matters."

He looked at Cap'n Tackaberry with a significance that intimated serious disagreement if any one tried to spoil the trip. The skipper of the *Lass* went away by himself and sat on the fore capstan and scowled on the preparations for the feast. He ate moodily and not heartily when the savory repast was ready, and did not join in the general smoke talk that followed.

There was an extra berth in the skipper's stateroom, and Cap'n Cook calmly took it at bedtime. The other captains disposed of the other berths

and the lockers of the house among themselves.

"Of course it ain't exactly regular for the crew to sleep aft," said Cap'n Kitchen cheerfully to the glowering skipper, "but this is a special occasion and we're all shipmasters together, and we might as well be sociable."

"I'd like to see the man that could get me into one of them fo'c'sle bunks," said Cap'n Sproul. "I've seen 'travelers' before in my life, but I never see 'em wearin' shoulder straps and carryin' swords, like them that's crawl-in' in those bunks."

"Sir," barked Cap'n Tackaberry in a rage, "you haven't opened your mouth so far without makin' some slur-rin' remark about my brig. I will now ask you to stop that kind of talk."

"Sir," retorted Cap'n Sproul, with great promptitude, "the way you keep lookin' at me all the time is sassier than any talk I've ever made. I ain't more'n half keepin' even with you."

"Oh, don't let's get into any argument," pleaded Cap'n Cole. He was devouring a quarter section of custard pie that he propped deftly on thumb and fingers. "Your vittles won't agree with you if you row and wrangle."

Cap'n Tackaberry kicked over a stool and retired to his stateroom. Cap'n Sproul went to sleep, lulled by his own mutterings.

At eight bells the next morning, and not before then, the *London Lass* went creaking out to sea. Cap'n Tackaberry had been up and fuming since eight bells at four a. m. But his crew took their own time over the ham and eggs and the piping hot coffee.

Cap'n Sproul, without being asked, but feeling the hankering for sea duties once again after his years of inactivity, assumed the position of first mate and, as the natural executive, roared orders. For the first watch Cap'n Doty took the wheel. After trimming sails for the first tack, the crew assembled aft and smoked and chatted in deep content. The sun was bland, there was just wind enough to heel her to the froth that topped the careering waves, and the excursion prom-

ised delight. Cap'n Cook was already planning the bill of fare for the noon meal, and four of the captains volunteered to shell the peas.

Cap'n Sproul and Cap'n Tackaberry trudged with pendulum promenade from rail to rail on the quarter-deck, hands behind their backs. Every time they passed they glared at each other.

"A couple of you tumble forrard," bellowed Cap'n Sproul, after careful scrutiny aloft. "Ease fore to'g'ls'l braces and set up them jib lifts."

"I think she's drawin' all clever as she is," objected the skipper. "And, by the way, sir, I think that from now on I'll handle my own vessel. I haven't asked you to give off orders."

"You can see for yourself," cried Cap'n Sproul, "that both them to'g'ls'ls are hauled too close into the wind, and them jibs ain't half drawin'. I'll leave it to these sea captains, here."

"You're right," was the unanimous chorus.

"I'll have it as I say," roared the skipper.

"Well, you won't sail this brig cross-legged with seven old skippers aboard and sweatin' blood all the time," declared Cap'n Sproul. "She's got to be sailed right."

"Who is there aboard here who shall say how she shall be sailed except me?" Cap'n Tackaberry pounded himself on the breast.

"Do you think you are qualified to tell seven American master mariners anything about sailing a brig?" inquired Cap'n Tansom sarcastically.

"Yes," yelled the Englishman, beside himself. And in his rage he added: "You damn Yankees!"

"You take that word back," said Cap'n Sproul fiercely.

"That's right—you take it back. You've insulted seven men that's better masters than you be—men that's sacrificed time and dignity to come along with you and work your tin skimmer into St. John, free gratis for nothin'." The speaker was Cap'n Cook, and he shook a smutty finger under the skipper's nose.

"Free gratis!" sneered Tackaberry,



They all scraped a salut .

his face white with passion, his yellow teeth showing. "You're eatin' more'n your devilish heads are worth every meal you are aboard. The grub you made me buy to bribe you is worth more than the whole kit of you. You probably never had a square meal before, and you've taken this way to get it."

Silence, a silence appalling and pregnant, fell upon his listeners. Cap'n Tackaberry misconstrued it.

"You go forrard and you stay forard," he shouted. "The whole of you! Go! I'll take that wheel and I'll give off the orders that go aboard here. For one more word out of any of you I'll declare you all mutineers when we make port. You want to remember you are on the high seas now, my fresh hearties."

They made no move. They simply stared at him. Cap'n Cook emitted a brusque and scornful: "Hunh!" "Hunh!" was the indorsing chorus from the others, and they looked him

up and down with blistering rebelliousness.

In his frantic ire the skipper of the *Lass* jumped up and down. He pawed under his coat tails and produced from one hip pocket a belaying pin, from the other a revolver. He had evidently armed for just such an occasion.

"Forrard with you, you seven old Yankee caterpillars!" he shrieked. "Forrard with you and chew canvas! I'm master of this brig. You ain't goin' to mutiny on me and gobble my good vittles. You'll eat hardtack and salt hoss for the rest of this trip. Down onto the main deck with you. It's mutiny every minute you stay here. I'm entitled to shoot, and the law gives me the right."

Cap'n Tansom was behind the frantic master. He winked at Cap'n Sproul and stealthily got down upon his hands and knees. The next moment Sproul drove both hands, palms outspread, against the breast of the Englishman, and he went backward and over Cap'n

Tansom's back, firing the revolver wildly in the air as he tumbled.

"Light on him—light on him!" yelled Cap'n Sproul, and the seven veterans landed in a heap like a football scrimmage. Two minutes later Cap'n Tackaberry was lying on deck, trussed like a calf bound for market, and disarmed.

"It may be mutiny, but it will be a queer kind of a court that says so," panted Cap'n Sproul, kneeling astride the prisoner and tapping finger on his breast. "When you invite guests aboard your brig and run amuck and threaten to kill 'em, guests might as well get busy on their own account." He put his hands under the skipper's arms and dragged him up to a sitting position, leaning against the rail. "Now the first thing for you to do is to apologize to your guests. Gather round, gents, and be apologized to."

"I'll see you all in hell, wired onto gridirons, before I apologize!" roared the Englishman. "I'll have you in jail for this, the whole of you!" And he proceeded to enter upon a dissertation regarding Yankees that Cap'n Sproul checked by a vigorous cuffing across the mouth.

"It sort of takes the edge off'm the enjoyment of the trip to have him settin' there with a face on him like a dead sculpin," complained Cap'n Cole. "I can't get up no appetite with him settin' lookin' at me."

"Lend a hand, here! Rouse him foward into the fo'c'sle," commanded Cap'n Sproul. "We ain't goin' to have the trip spoiled by him."

"Ain't we goin' too far?" was the timid suggestion of Cap'n Kitchen.

"We've gone a middlin', consid'able distance already, and we might as well keep a-goin'. He started the thing. He threatened to kill us. We ain't no Portygee sailors. There's seven of our words against one of his. Make whole hog of it, gents. Rouse him foward."

Cap'n Sproul's spirit animated the rest after that. They deposited the raging skipper in the fo'c'sle and barred him in.

"When you apologize and straighten out and ain't a dangerous person to

be at large," stated Cap'n Sproul, "we'll let you come aft and associate."

At noon Cap'n Tackaberry was irreconcilable and more abusive than ever. He was in that desperate state of mind in which he stated that he would rather starve than eat anything that their hands had cooked. There fore, they made a thoroughly satisfactory meal on fricasseed chicken and fixings, and picked out for the prisoner some frowsy grub from the stores of the *Lass*.

"I knew it must be bad, to have 'em leave him like they did," said Cap'n Cook, wrinkling his nose at the remembrance of what he deposited in the fo'c'sle, "but I didn't have no idee it was as bad as it is. Considerin' that the chicken is settin' so well with all, I prefer not to talk about it. But after he eats that, and sleeps one night in a bunk there, if it don't get through his hide that bein' a sailor on the *London Lass* is different from spendin' the night with his King Edward, then there ain't much hope of reformin' him."

But Cap'n Tackaberry, judging from his remarks and his threats, was not especially improved the next day. He raged at them like a maniac.

"He's the hardest man I ever see," sighed Cap'n Cook.

"I don't wonder that he's hard," stated Cap'n Sproul. "The grub that's aboard this craft—even the grub he carries for his own table—is enough to petrify any man that eats it."

At the end of the second day they had in no fashion tamed the skipper's spirit. And they were off Grand Menan, and St. John and a serious prospect faced them.

"Let's stand off and cruise for a couple more days," advised Cap'n Sproul, who was relishing his quarter-deck duties and the inspiration of the open sea. "He may get some sense into his head by that time, or we may get an idea into ours."

"I motion we stand off till the vittles is gone," said Cap'n Cook. "If we're goin' to be hung for mutiny on the high seas we might as well die on full stomachs."

There followed two days during which they drank deep of the peace of the open ocean, putting out of their minds that cantankerous captive in the fo'c'sle. From the brig's papers they informed themselves of the name of the managing owners in St. John and, at last, stuffed serenely full of their last meal of steak and trimmings, "brought to" the *London Lass* in St. John harbor and let go her mudhook.

"Cap'n Tackaberry," announced Cap'n Sproul through the door of the fo'c'sle, "you've got about two hours of solemn meditation ahead of you. There won't be any of us here to disturb you. You can tell any kind of a story you feel like tellin' when it comes your turn. We're goin' ashore now and tell our'n. You'll be let out in due season."

A half hour later seven elderly men of serious mien trudged in single file into the office of the managing owners of the *London Lass*, confronted an amazed gentleman at a desk, and Cap'n Sproul stood forth from the group as spokesman.

"I'll make you acquainted," said he, "with Cap'ns Siel Cook, Theron Doty, Oral Kitchen, Osney Cole, Cass B. Tansom, Barnjum Tewksbury, and"—he slapped his breast—"Cap'n Aaron Sproul, late of the *Jefferson P. Benn*. At your service."

They all scraped a salute.

"There's a little story goes with this," continued Cap'n Sproul—and he told it to the round-eyed owner.

"Now, there she lays out there in the harbor, with your catamount captain battened below. All safe, sound, tight, and right. There may be two ways of lookin' at it, the way it's turned out. Now how do you look at it?"

"I think you all have laid yourselves liable," stated the owner severely.

"We know better than to try to change the mind of a Bluenose by argument. Go ahead and complain and arrest," said Cap'n Sproul, with the utmost equanimity.

"Well, I don't know about that, either," stammered the owner, looking them over.

"Well, make up your mind one way or t'other," snapped the spokesman. He pulled out his watch. "There's a train leavin' for the States in less than an hour. We propose to be either in jail or on board that train."

"We ain't particular," stated the bland Cap'n Cole. "We've had plenty to eat and now we'll have plenty of fun when we tell the story in court."

"Just the tellin' of what the *Lass* carries in her regular stores for sailors to eat, will make a half a column of good rich readin'," remarked Cap'n Cook.

"And when that news gets spread along coast it will help a lot in ship-pin' crews for her," added Cap'n Kitchen.

"You Yankees have a strange notion of humor," sneered the owner.

"There's a di'gram goes with this joke, so that it can be understood on this side of the line," said Cap'n Sproul significantly.

"Look here, you fellows——"

"Call us 'cap'ns," advised Cap'n Sproul, wagging monitory forefinger.

"Captains," choked the owner, "this is too ridiculous a case to bring before a court. I wash my hands of the affair. Good day."

"I'm takin' it to mean that you'll carry out that same cake of common-sense soap and let old Tackaberry wash his hands, too," suggested Cap'n Sproul.

"The matter stops here, if you need that assurance," yelped the owner, banging his fist on his desk.

"We were intendin', as shipmasters who know their business," said Cap'n Sproul patronizingly, "to give you a little good advice about feedin' sailors, but seein' as how we ain't been thanked for our work to date, we haven't got anything to give away, not even advice."

"Only this," interposed Cap'n Cook. "Get out there as soon as you can. The smell of what's been cooked aboard her the last four days will make a hearty meal for a Bluenose. Get there before Tackaberry swallows it all."

"DO IT NOW"

By Charles Battell Loomis

DO it now!"

We laugh at the man who gives us this advice because the thing that he wants us to do now is to buy his article, and we know that it is his axe that we are expected to grind.

But it is good advice, nevertheless.

If the man who first dreamed of the subway in New York had continued to dream, and had let his dream go no further; if to-day he had decided to publish his dream in a letter to the newspaper, why, people would be saying: "A pipe dreamer. How could a subterranean railway be built under busy New York? And how could it be made safe even if it were built? Why will a man waste his time writing foolishness to the newspapers?"

But whoever first dreamed that dream allowed his dream to be noised abroad, and the result is that to-day the subway in New York is a long-accepted commonplace of travel—we even growl at its wonderful service, and kick if it takes us over half an hour to travel the length of Manhattan Island.

First the dreamer, then the realizer of the dream, then the whole world saying impatiently: "Why couldn't they have thought of that years ago?"

To-day overhead sidewalks are only a dream. In ten years' time they will be so common in downtown New York that a man will be able to spend a whole morning walking around the business district without descending to the street, ten stories below.

I know of a little colony of artists on the Connecticut shore. For years they lived in the same town and met in New York once in a while when they ran across each other in some picture gallery, but there was nothing to call them regularly together out in Land's Point. Now and again one of them would say: "We ought to have a sketch class. It would serve to get us together for a smoke and a little unrushed work and chat." But nothing came of it until a hustler from Illinois joined the colony.

He was an illustrator on a wide-awake magazine, and he had imbibed some of the hustling spirit that was abroad in that office.

He had not been a week at Land's Point before some one said: "Isn't it a pity that we artists never get together to sketch and have a little interchange of ideas?"

They were on their way in to town with material. "It sure is," said he. Then an idea flashed in his brain, a huge puff of smoke came out of his mouth—almost like the result of the idea—and he half closed his eyes and said nothing more until they reached the Grand Central.

Next evening every artist in Land's Point received an invitation that ran like this:

DEAR MR. —: There's going to be a meeting of a little sketch class at my studio on Thursday evening. Have secured an interesting model. Come if you can. Beer and cheese and cigars. Bring the wife.

That was all.

There are fourteen artists in Land's Point, and ten of them came. The married ones brought their wives, and the bromide of the evening was the remark made by nearly every man on leaving: "Haven't had such a good time in ten years. Let's keep it up."

They did keep it up. They met at different houses, they never had anything more than beer or coffee, and cheese or sandwiches, but inside of a year the direct result of those unpretentious gatherings was a very beautiful Christmas gift book, the joint work of half a dozen Land's Point artists.

Another result was plenty of good feeling.

And the whole thing the consequence of the "do--now" attitude of the Illinois man.

A friend of mine, a writer, was at a lunch club in New York, and he met for the first time an artist who said: "I've always wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed that little story of yours which I illustrated. The pictures were half drawn already, you suggested so much in the text."

The story writer was naturally pleased at this, and he said: "I'm awfully glad to hear you say that. No one has ever spoken about that story before, and I thought it was a failure. I honestly thought the pictures were the only good thing about it, because I had expected it to make some noise and I never heard a peep about it until you spoke."

"Why," said the artist, "it's a household word in half a dozen homes I know of. You ought to do another. That character of the little girl who never suspected anything but the best of motives for persons' actions is capable of being worked some more."

"Would you illustrate the story if I wrote another?"

"I certainly would. Why, old man Barker, the editor, said he liked your story and wished you'd come around with another. Said you'd moved, or he'd write you."

The writer beamed like a Cheshire cat. "I'll have one by this time to-morrow," said he enthusiastically.

Now, I wish to pause right here to say that if that writer had gone home and had said to himself: "That's a good idea of Rickley's; some day I'll get to work at that story," the some day would never have come, for the reason that the writer was a man who was run by enthusiasms.

But he knew his temperament; he knew that "Do it now" was his only salvation because he is naturally lazy, and the next morning he sat down to his desk, fully determined to write that story before food passed his mouth.

Lunch was late that day, but the story, or the first draft of it, was written, and then, being somewhat of a hustler when the mood was on him, he telephoned to the artist asking whether he would like to hear his new story.

The artist answered "Yes" with a ring of enthusiasm in his voice, and a few minutes later the writer was on his way to the studio of the other.

"Bully!" was the artist's comment when the tale had been read. "How would a picture like this do for where she meets the beggar man?" And he made a few rapid strokes on his pad that indicated a picture full of movement and life.

"Fine! When can you draw them?"

"To-morrow. I'll sidetrack something I was putting at and get right to work, because I can see half a dozen pictures in that story."

Enthusiasm had changed cars, you see; but the journey to the editor's office was still under way, and before the week was out the editor had received writer and artist in his sanctum, had laughed over the pictures, had promised to read the story that evening, and when the two friends met at the same lunch club a week later they compared notes. The notes were from the editor and they were both acceptances.

A stimulating remark, a quick dream, enthusiasm!

Do it now!



The Elopement of Shirley

By Jessie Imbrie Miller

ILLUSTRATED BY F. X. CHAMBERLIN

BORIS, the wolf-hound, snoozed beside the fire, and the tear that had trickled from his left brown eye was drying on his shiny muzzle. His master—one of the few beings in the world that Boris thoroughly respected—had departed for an ante-breakfast ride of ten miles, and had refused to take him. True, with great politeness and solicitation, his master had explained that his refusal was based solely on the fact that he was going to Squire Lumley's, whose prize mastiff Boris had made into particularly fine mince-meat the week before; but surely both Mr. Lumley and Mr. Craig must have realized that the untimely death of Beauregarde was merely the deplored but unavoidable outcome of an affair of honor between gentlemen.

The regular forms of procedure had not, perhaps, been religiously observed; but the fight had been an understood thing for days; ever since that little affair in the upper cotton-field, when Boris had been insulted in a manner that no Southern gentleman could overlook. Surely the man who had reared him could understand that a Siberian nobleman, who was happy in the addi-

tional advantage of being trained in Virginia, could stoop to nothing mean or reprehensible.

But Craig Moran had been as adamant to explanations and entreaties.

So, after standing with his wet nose to the crack of the door until the footsteps of his master died away, Boris had come back to the crackling fire and slumped dejectedly upon the rug.

Firelight and sunlight mingling flickered on the polished floor. The tall clock that had come from England with the master's great-uncle, Lord Charteris, ticked solemnly but not uncheerfully beside the door. The petals of the pink magnolia brushed against the window.

Clouds drifted across the big hound's brain; he sighed softly and sniffed. "That possum bone—buried where? Surely he remembered—and the rabbits—with their white tails—too silly—running—running—running." Boris, the wolf-hound, was asleep.

Softly the great door that gave into the hallway opened a crack, then wider. A face peered round the edge, a face that twenty or more young Southern gentlemen had desired to gaze upon

across their respective breakfast-tables. In short, it was the face of Miss Shirley Dean, far and away the most popular beauty in that part of Virginia during the early twenties.

Her eyes were very bright this morning, and the color came and went in her smooth cheeks.

Carefully she shut the door behind her, giving herself scarcely time to get fully into the room.

As she stood there, scarcely breathing, fearful of surprise, Miss Shirley seemed like an old-fashioned portrait framed in oak. Even the long plume on her hat was motionless, and the soft skirt of her blue velvet habit hung in still folds about her. Only her eyes lived, and in them was a look of excitement, doubt, and fear. Her face had never before worn that look on entering this room.

Boris heaved himself up and came to meet her, and she started violently.

"Oh!" she cried under her breath, laughing unsteadily. "You old wretch! How you frightened me!" But she stroked his shaggy head and let him rub a clammy nose against her sleeve.

Then she pushed him from her gently, bidding him be quiet; and he watched her cross the room and stand beside his master's heavy desk, leaning against the great claw-footed chair. Her face was very white, and her small gauntleted hands trembled as she took from the pocket of her dress a folded note and laid it on the table, placing it on the open pages of a book that Boris' master had been reading.

Three times Miss Shirley changed the position of the slip of paper, and for a moment seemed about to open it and read it once again; but at last, with a quick little sigh that was almost a sob, she turned away, as if she were afraid of something, and went over to the fire.

There, with her back to the room and her face to a gilt-framed mirror, she stood a moment, looking uncertainly at the white face in the glass.

"If I were such a little silly as *you* are," she remarked in a voice that broke in spite of her, "I'd shake myself!"

The eyes that looked back at her were still distinctly tearful. Shirley straightened herself severely.

"You should remember," said she sternly, "that tears are hardly flattering to Huntington."

The mirrored eyes blinked valiantly, but with no visible result.

"You should be happy—happy and proud to-day; and you *are*, you goose, you, mighty happy! And I wish you'd show it!"

Her voice was gaining strength and clearness, but the eyes were just a little bit unsatisfactory still.

"What," continued this young person still more sternly, "what if you *are* leaving your home and your good old nigger mammy, and—and your guardian—who ought not to be considered, because he believes all the lies that he hears about your lover! Right many girls have to do it; and what other girls can do, you can! Now—please don't be a fool!"

There was a moment of silent conflict, till the rebellious blue eyes were downed, and then the vapors lifted.

Turning, Miss Shirley stood and gazed about her. Her guardian's gloves lay on the table, limp, empty, but suggesting faithfully the lines of Mr. Craig's aristocratic hands—even the stretched place on the little finger of the left glove, where he wore his signet-ring.

Shirley caught her breath sharply, took a step forward, hesitated, pounced upon the gloves and stuffed them under the white lace frill, into the bosom of her habit—rather a strange proceeding, when you remember that Mr. Craig was not to be considered.

The warm red mounted to her cheeks. "I wish I had something of mammy's, too," she murmured, just a little guiltily, "something of all of them."

Then opening her silver locket quickly she raised it in her hands and kissed her lover's handsome smiling face conscientiously and with an ardor that was quite convincing—to the very casual observer and Miss Shirley Dean.

Boris sniffed audibly, and Shirley closed the locket with a snap.

The clock beside the door struck six, and at the sound Miss Shirley's knees grew weak, and she laid her hands on the back of a chair to steady herself a little.

"Time to go," said Shirley softly, "more than time! Good-by, old room; good-by, table, fireplace, boar's head, old clock——" She stopped, trembling. She had never dreamed it would be quite like this. Her lips moved, but no sound came, except a small and shaky whisper: "Good-by, Craig Moran!"

There was an early feeling in the great hall, and the stag's head looked down as if in great surprise to see Miss Shirley dressed for a ride at this time of the day.

Unseen, she slipped along, holding her breath. The fresh breeze blowing in at the open door ruffled her hair and blew back the soft folds of her habit as she hurried on.

She wondered when they would miss her; who would be the first to find that she was gone. It would be mammy, probably, when she came in to waken her at eight o'clock. Mammy would find the great bed with the rosy hangings empty. Then she would murmur, chuckling softly, "Lan' sakes, if de blessed chile ain't done gone waked herself!" and she would go into the pretty dressing-room to find her baby. But there would be no "missy" there, and mammy would see on the dainty dressing-table where the silver things flashed in the sun, a paper parcel addressed to "Dear Mammy." And in that she would find a gold chain and some money—gold pieces—and a picture in water-color of Miss Shirley Dean, dressed in her best yellow brocade and with a white rose in her hair.

Then mammy's good old hands would tremble and her eyes would stare, and as she turned to look about her she would feel quite suddenly how empty and how silent were the rooms. And then——

But Miss Shirley resolutely choked both the thoughts that came so fast and

the burning sob that seemed to scorch her throat, and fairly ran out of the little side door into the Magnolia Walk that led down to the wooded lane bounding the Moran plantation on the north.

Huntington Lacy waited for her in the lane, restlessly pacing up and down the grassy bridle-path.

A cry of relief broke from her lips. He was there, the man who was to be her husband, whose love was to compensate her for all that she had lost. He would protect her, comfort her. He would tell her again—and she needed to be told—what her love meant to him, her love and the fact that she pitied and trusted him when all the world was his enemy. Gathering up her skirt she ran to meet him.

He turned about, and as he strode toward her a dark flush mounted to his forehead and his eyes glowed red.

"What the devil was the matter with you?" he cried thickly. "You've kept me waiting a lifetime!"

Shirley stood still, and as she stared at the man, her eyes grew black and all the color faded from her cheeks. A horror that was almost a sickness swept over her.

Huntington Lacy caught her arm roughly, but as he did so something in her eyes sobered him a little, and he paused.

For a moment both were silent, and as she watched him, fascinated, unable to take her eyes from his dark face, she saw the heavy veins stand out upon his forehead and his lips crushed between his teeth.

When he spoke his voice was gentle, even pleading. "Shirley! Shirley!" he cried, "I was half-mad! I—I believed you had forsaken me!"

She spoke, and her voice had the sharp ring of steel on steel. "You have been drinking," she said, "and you were angry. Take your hand from my arm!"

He leaned nearer to her. "You shall listen to me!" he cried, as she moved backward, putting out a hand as if to push him from her. His voice was low and broken as he stretched his arms toward her. "Shirley, Shirley, come to



A moment later Huntington Lacy lay in a cloud of dust, a shaggy, snarling giant standing over him.

me!" he cried. "It was because I love you, because I——" He swayed a little, but regained his balance lightly.

There were scorn and disgust in her face, and he realized that in one weak moment he had lost her—lost all that he had lied and striven for. His ears rang, and there was a wavy, floating thing before his eyes. It was a moment before he realized that she was speaking.

"You need say nothing more," she said, pausing a moment to steady her voice a little. "I have heard and seen enough already, enough to show me that

all that the world says of you—all that Mr. Moran says of you—is true. I've been a blind fool, but thank Heaven I've been made to understand in time—only just in time!"

She turned, as if about to leave him, but he caught her roughly by the shoulder. "Where are you going?" he asked huskily, as his strong fingers buried themselves in her velvet sleeve.

Shirley half turned to him, looking over her shoulder, and the scornful lids drooped over her eyes. "I am going home," she said coldly; but at the word "home" her heart gave a great bound

of exultation and relief. "Be so good as to stand aside and let me pass."

Her tone and the poise of her head were imperious; a man in his senses would have obeyed her. But reason does not stay with wine and passion.

"Home!" he cried angrily, shaking her. "Home—to Craig Moran! Home to the man who has stolen you from me, lied to you about me! Damn him! You think I haven't known how slight my hold has been! You think I've been as blind as he is! No, you come with me!"

As he spoke he drew from his hip pocket a pistol, and the sunlight glinted on the barrel of it.

"If you think that you can frighten me by this ridiculous gallery-play, you are mistaken. You will hardly add this to your other crimes—that you will kill a woman." She spoke slowly, and though her face was white, and her eyes were brilliant, her voice was even and her figure straight and motionless.

"I would not," said he thickly, "unless I must. Go—mount!"

She glanced across the road to where two horses stood stamping their well-shod feet, and rubbing their soft noses on the wooden fence-rails. The light click of the bits and the soft chafing of straining leather came to her ears.

She looked far down the road. It was rarely traveled even in summer. Grass was thick in the ruts.

Shirley turned her eyes quickly toward the broad, unused fields that lay between her and the cultivated part of Craig Moran's plantation. She was facing the Magnolia Walk.

Oh, if she might see Craig Moran, tall and swift-footed and strong, coming to her as he had come on that day when her boat was overturned in the river, or that other time when she had fallen from her horse and hurt herself so badly that she could only crawl along painfully on her hands and knees. He had seemed always to know when she was in danger or distress. Why did he fail her now—now? A sort of anger against him mingled with her growing despair. Yet in the midst of the anger came a longing keen as pain

to feel his arm around her and to have the strength of his broad shoulders between her and all the danger in the world.

Something was moving in the farthest of the fields—a speck, a very animated speck, a live thing coming near. Her eyes widened. It was no man but some wild thing, some vision of her brain.

The voice of Huntington Lacy broke the stillness, grating harshly. "I will give you until I count ten!" said he.

If it could be something—anything to help her! She looked again, clasping her hands tightly upon her breast. It was coming—coming—a flying thing; and it was behind the man so that he could not see.

"Four!" he counted slowly.

She strained her eyes, her lips were parted. The flying thing grew larger, took on shape. With a tremendous effort Shirley choked back a scream, for it was Boris—Boris! doubling like a rabbit, his long legs overlapping each other as he bounded, ten feet at a bound, over the stubby fields. He had seen her!

"Eight!"

Shirley thought quickly. Boris must be made to see that the man meant her harm, and she must have time—time!

"Wait!" she cried piteously. "Only a moment! Yes—I am going! I—Oh, put down the pistol. I'm afraid of it. Only put it down and I go!"

Slowly he lowered the weapon. Shirley allowed herself to sway, as if about to fall; and the man sprang forward, catching her in his arms.

It was enough. A moment later Huntington Lacy lay in a cloud of dust, a shaggy, snarling giant standing over him, two rows of white teeth snapping in his face. And Shirley Dean was running like a deer back to her home, back to the old plantation, back to Craig Moran.

The door by which she had come out was wide, and she ran in. Reaching her guardian's library door she burst that open unceremoniously and would

have entered had she not heard voices and cries and hurrying footsteps in the corridor beyond. Turning, she hurried once more into the open hallway, and ran suddenly against Aunt Chloe, who with wide terror-stricken eyes and panting breath was running toward a crowd of servants gathered at the great front door.

Shirley grabbed the fat old woman, hugging her warmly. "Here I am, mammy!" cried she exultingly, between laughter and tears. "Did you think that I was lost, you silly?"

The look upon Aunt Chloe's face changed from vague terror to acute anxiety. Catching the girl's hands in her own and glancing fearfully over her shoulder at the rest, she began to push Miss Shirley backward toward the stairs.

"Run 'long, honey, run 'long up to yuh room! Mammy'll be there in a minute. Run 'long, chile!"

Shirley caught her breath as she looked over mammy's shoulder. The others—Jenny, and black Sam, and tottering old Ebenezer—seemed to be waiting until she should go before they opened the great door.

"What's the matter?" cried Miss Shirley. "Oh, what is it, mammy?"

"Nothin', missy, fo' de Lord, nothin'—jest li'l accident; and mammy doesn't want her baby to be skaired! Dere's a—"

Shirley's hands were on Aunt Chloe's fat shoulders, and the grip of her little fingers was so hard that at another time the woman would have screamed.

"Who's hurt?" asked Miss Shirley sharply.

Mammy's eyes fell, and she was silent; but she still tried to push the girl away, out of sight of the others and the door.

With a broken cry Shirley pushed her old nurse aside and sprang forward.

"Open the door," she cried.

Shufflingly they obeyed her, and she looked out—out across the smooth white carriage-way and down the stone-flagged, flower-bordered path that stretched far as the eye could see, be-

tween two rows of elms and maples. Near the end the path divided to encircle a marble-basined fountain, then swept on to where the driveway crossed it again, and the stone pillars of the entrance-gate reared themselves upward.

Shirley had seen many lovers come and go that way—the twenty odd young gentlemen who had, at various times, strolled by her side, sung or wailed beneath her window, showered her with stiff bouquets, which Shirley promptly despatched to sick or suffering neighbors, and in other ways had made themselves useful, ornamental, insufferable, enjoyable, or idiotic for her sweet sake.

Her eyes saw first the entire path, then fixed upon one point. Four men were carrying some one on a hastily improvised stretcher, covered with a gay red-bordered blanket—a man in a torn and mud-smeared riding-suit and black top-boots. One sleeve was torn out at the shoulder, leaving shreds of fluttering cloth and linen; and the arm, limp and useless now, in spite of the great cordlike muscles, lay across his body. Forehead and cheeks and thick black hair were caked with hardened clay, and a long uneven stripe of dry red-brown meandered from forehead to neck, and even down upon the ruffles on his breast, making them stiff and dark.

It was Craig Moran. And Shirley, standing very white and cold in the doorway, knew, now that she felt what life would be without him, that it was her lover—no, not her lover, but the man she loved, who was coming to her now by the white path under the maples.

She stepped forward as they brought the litter nearer, and she felt no desire to faint or scream, only a hunger to know one thing.

They were eager to explain, speaking low and hurriedly. "Done fell f'om 'is horse, Miss Shirley. Man done shot at him, and de bullet hit Lady Grey, an—"

"Is he dead?" asked Shirley, and her voice was cold and even; so that those



"Sorry to be such a nuisance, elegant miss," said he.

who did not know might have thought that she did not care.

A chorus of hushed voices assured her that it was not certain.

It had never been Miss Shirley's habit to give orders. Craig Moran or his aunt, old Miss Lucretia, had attended to all that. But now the words came clear and sharp; and the servants, seeing the change that had come over the girl, looked to her as their mistress.

She turned to Chloe: "Bring him to his room. You, Sam, take Black Jane and ride for Doctor Caton. Jenny—bandages!"

Passing them all, and tearing off her gauntlets as she ran, she hurried up the stairs and on to the west bedroom, the one with dark-blue hangings and the long windows that look out to the river.

For a moment the girl paused on the threshold, remembering the first time that she had come into that room. That was ten years before, when she was just eleven, after her beautiful mother's sudden death in France; and Mr. Craig Moran, her mother's stepbrother and Shirley's guardian, was recovering then from a severe illness. He was barely twenty-two, far younger than Shirley's mother, whom he had loved dearly as an own sister; and Shirley remembered that as she came into the room, clinging somewhat desperately to the hand of Miss Lucretia, he had smiled at her in such a friendly way that she had not been in the least afraid, not even though his cheeks were hollow and his eyes had a strange shine in them. He had held out his hand to her and taken hers very gently, looking, looking into her round blue eyes until she wondered if he would ever speak at all.

Then he had squeezed her hand, a little awkwardly, and said with a boyish frankness that won her heart at once: "I'm glad to have you with me, Shirley. I'm very fond of you already, and I hope you'll like your aged guardian."

To which she had replied sedately, "Thank you, sir," and then, wishing to

be very polite, and because she felt in her small heart a sudden glow of pity and affection for the sick man, she had added quickly: "I don't mind your being old at all!"

And at this Mr. Craig had laughed. But she remembered the quick change that came over his face a moment later as he looked up at his aunt and said, with a queer little shake in his voice: "She's going to be just like Edith—only prettier."

It was six weeks later, and a perfect summer afternoon.

There was a festive and expectant air about the cool, high-ceilinged rooms and broad verandas. Flowers were everywhere—tall lilies, half-open roses, spicy carnations, waving ferns.

The mahogany piano in the long drawing-room was drawn well forward, for there was to be music, and Miss Shirley's tall gilt harp stood slim and erect beside it.

Curious little breezes fluttered through the rooms, stirring the flowers, moving the curtains, lightly turning even the sheets of music to see just what Miss Shirley was prepared to sing.

Perfumes hovered about the place, perfumes of flowers, and, more subtle still, faint hints of lemons, strawberries, ice-cold mint, and slices of yellow pineapple from the dining-room.

There, dusky, soft-footed slaves moved about decorously, some bearing trays filled with thin glasses, some arranging piles of dishes on the long table, all busy with the finishing-touches of preparation, and all furtively mindful of the watchful eye of Miss Lucretia, who seemed to be everywhere at once.

And through the country round, all coming to the Moran plantation, might be seen carriages, carriages, carriages, overflowing with beauty, color, laughter, and delight; for all the neighbors on that day were gathering at the request of Lucretia and Miss Shirley Dean. And the joyful event to be celebrated was the recovery of Mr. Craig Moran.

As the French clock upon the mantel

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finished the fourth of its precise little strokes, Miss Shirley swept into the drawing-room, her satin slippers making no sound on the dark, polished floor.

She wore her soft pearl-colored satin gown that afternoon, and there were dark red roses in her hair; one over her pink ear on the right side, and one hanging head downward, quite drunk with joy apparently, on her neck just over the fat curl that lay so long and shining on the whitest shoulder in Virginia.

The occasions upon which Miss Shirley wore that dress and crimson roses were days to be remembered. Why, only last week old Colonel Bayland—he was a young buck of five-and-twenty at the time of which I write—leaned toward me over his glass of toddy, nodding reminiscently, and said: "Yes, sir! That was the day, sir, that Miss Shirley wore pearl-colored satin and red roses. Angelically beautiful she was, sir. I've not forgotten it in fifty years. Why, sir, I proposed to her three times, myself, that afternoon!"

Restless as the breeze she moved about the room, turning the sheets of music, touching or sniffing at a flower here and there; and always with a little smile upon her lips, a smile that one might not describe in a word, for it was not altogether dreamy or tender or amused, but something of all these. And yet, even as she smiled, a small sigh lifted the laces on her breast.

At the sound of a man's footstep she turned, with a deliberateness that suggested that she might have been expecting him, and met the eyes of Craig Moran. He, carefully dressed in black, with a high satin stock and white lace ruffles, his right arm in a sling, stood in the doorway smiling; and his smile seemed, somehow, a reflection of Shirley's.



Bending, he looked into her eyes.

Tall, lean, and symmetrical, with eyes as blue as the ribbons on Shirley's latest Sunday bonnet, and hair black as his stock, the master of "Magnolia" was a man to whom a woman would give as many dances as he wanted and she dared.

Shirley, who had contracted a habit of becoming suddenly confused of late, was searching her brain for a really sensible remark, when her guardian, with an elaborate frown, advanced to meet her.

"Sorry to be such a nuisance, elegant miss," said he, "but," with a twist of his neck and a really agonized glance at the mirror, "there's something wrong with my stock, I think."

Shirley regarded the black band judicially, and shook her head. "You are a dream of loveliness," said she. "No one could find a flaw. There is, indeed, an illusive charm about you, sir, this afternoon——"

"Just for that piece of impertinence, you may stand in the corner all the rest of the afternoon!"

"Well, that will keep people from saying disagreeable things behind my back,

at all events," said Shirley flippantly. "But it's rather mean of you to limit me to half a circle of admirers, when I might have a whole one."

Paying no attention to her sallies, he turned again to the long mirror. "It may look right, but it *feels* exceedingly painful," said he miserably. "Too tight, or too loose, or caught, or something."

"Why didn't you call Sambo and make him fix it for you again," she asked somewhat suspiciously.

"I did. I shouted for him, but he was helping in the dining-room. I suppose you couldn't—would you mind just taking a look at the thing?"

Miss Shirley condescended to investigate, delicately, with one finger, she standing on her toes—she wouldn't have admitted it for worlds!—he bending down a little.

"You must have given it a jerk, somehow. I don't see how you did it," said she at length, gingerly poking the satin folds.

"I can't imagine how I did!" responded he with evident concern, sinking into a chair and giving himself up to wicked rapture. And to himself he added: "And with only one hand, too!"

"Thank you, you're an angel," said he as she finished. "Do you know," turning about to face her as she leaned against the high piano, "I've missed so much having you to take care of me—now that I'm nearly well—I'm going to break my other arm to-morrow!"

"Oh, I wouldn't," said Shirley calmly, wondering if he could see her heart beating through her dress. "A sequel's never so nice as the first volume; and besides, one sling is artistic and becoming, while two—"

"Shirley," said Craig Moran, rising suddenly and standing with his hand behind him, "would you mind not—if you don't stop rubbing that rose against your chin you'll be sorry!"

Shirley laid the rose on the piano.

"I beg your pardon. I know you think I'm crazy!" he exclaimed confusedly. "But the fact is I—I want to say—to tell you something—I'm afraid I can't hold out much longer, but I

won't risk spoiling the afternoon for you."

"Yes, yes, I see," gasped Shirley hastily. "And besides I'm afraid there — Oh! I mean I *think* there isn't time."

"Well, I never expected to find you both in the drawing-room on time!" exclaimed plump Miss Lucretia thankfully. "Young Mr. Bolling and the Chesham girls are coming now. Disgusting of them to be so early! Why, Shirley, what's the matter with your eyes?"

The "recuperation party," as Shirley called it, was a brilliantly successful affair, as, indeed, were all the receptions at Magnolia.

Four engagements were the direct result of it, thirty women were able to display their new gowns to the best advantage, the music was of the highest order, and the refreshments most appealing.

Angela Dale was there, and her magnificent contralto voice made exquisite harmony with Shirley's harp and Crespì's violin.

Then there was young, very young Alfonso Nardi, a pianist of great fame and languishing appearance. This latest lion among ladies rendered with soulful passion and inspired glances several original songs without words, "Sounds without Tunes," Craig Moran invidiously called them—all dedicated to Miss Dean.

As for Shirley, she was everywhere, laughing with the young men, coquetting with the older ones, confiding in the girls, and listening smiling to the dowagers. And where this lovely comet moved, after her came a trail of suitors reaching half across the room; and the disgraceful little creature smiled on every one of them!

They were gone at last: the hospitable dining-table, the drawing-room, the shady terraces, and broad verandas were deserted. Faint echoes of the laughter seemed to linger in the air, faint echoes of the music seemed to float about the rooms; but the human forms were there no longer.

Craig Moran, whose late illness, in addition to his well-known courtesy and wit, had made him the hero of the hour, was in his library.

Shirley, who had noted each change that had come over his face that afternoon, had ordered him to go away and rest, and he had laughingly obeyed her.

An hour later, gaily balancing on one small hand a tray on which were cakes and wine, she tapped ever so lightly on the library door.

No answer.

Shirley tapped again, waiting with her pretty head tilted on one side like a listening bird. At length she opened the door gently, thinking that he might have fallen asleep or left the room.

Only a half-light lingered there, leaving the corners of the room in a shadow. An open book lay on the floor, its sprawling pages motionless; and near it gleamed the white folds of a crumpled letter. No breath of air parted the curtains.

And by the table in the center of the room sat Craig Moran, his head upon his arm.

Shirley's fingers tightened desperately to the tray, but it slipped in spite of her, and the thin glass and saucer fell with a clink and clatter on the floor.

Craig Moran sprang up as if he had been struck, and the look of his eyes as she first saw them drove the remaining color from her cheeks.

For a moment neither spoke. Then, in obedience to a gesture, she came in and closed the door. Crossing the room quickly, she stood beside a high carved chair, resting her hands upon the top of it.

"I meant to tell you to-night," she faltered brokenly, for her voice seemed to catch in her throat. "I forgot about the letter."

"I see," said he slowly, and his voice was dull and even. "Why did you not go?"

Shirley pulled herself together. "Will you let me tell you everything—now?"

"Certainly," he answered wearily. "I am anxious to hear everything you have to tell."

She told him, then, not stopping to

choose her words, and for that reason all the more eloquent. Her lips were quivering and her slim fingers twisted themselves together as she spoke.

"I was going to tell you right away," she pleaded eagerly. "I went straight to your room. You were not there, and then I heard the voices in the hall. I ran out to the door and made them open it." Shirley's eyes closed for a minute, and she clung to the hard back of the chair. "I thought that you were dead."

"Sit down, Shirley," said he gently, but she shook her head.

"I dream about you that way—sometimes—with the blood on your face!" said she.

He waited until she was more quiet, then: "I supposed you guessed that it was Lacy who shot at me and killed my horse," he said.

"No," whispered Shirley, horror in her eyes. "You must have passed him on the way. And I went to him after that!" she cried. "Oh! I wish Boris had killed him!"

And having come to the end of her endurance, Shirley stumbled into a chair and took out her small handkerchief, sobbing most wretchedly.

Craig Moran hesitated a moment, then he came quickly to her, and bending down, laid his left hand upon her shoulder.

"Please, little girl!" said he. "It's bad enough thinking what might have happened to you, without seeing you like this. I can't see you cry, Shirley! You've been foolish—only because of your warm, generous little heart—but I, I've been far worse. Why, for six weeks, Shirley, I've let myself fancy that—you cared for me!"

"But I did—I do!" sobbed Shirley, driven to extremes.

Craig Moran took his hand from her shoulder. "Shirley!" he cried. "If I could believe you! You know—you must know how I love you—how I have loved you all these years!"

"But you never said so!" cried she between her sobs. "If you—if you'd g-given me the least encouragement I'd

—I'd have married you three years ago!"

"Shirley!"

"Y—yes, I would! Why—why didn't you ask me?"

"But how could I, dear? You never let me suspect. I was your guardian—you were under my protection. If you hadn't cared for me, it would have made you so unhappy."

"I'm worse unhappy now!" sobbed Shirley.

Craig Moran was on his knees beside her now. "Will you forgive me, dear? I'm the biggest fool alive, I think! I don't deserve anything. Oh, please give me just one of your hands!"

She gave it to him—an exceedingly damp hand it was. "Will you believe me now?" she whispered.

"Make me!" he cried eagerly, holding the fingers close.

Shirley was silent for a moment, then, with a gasp at her own temerity: "I'll walk to Mrs. Grant's and back—by myself—after dark!" said she.

"You angel, no, you won't!" cried Craig Moran, something very like a sob in his own throat. "Listen, Shirley! There's an easier way. If you loved Lacy, really, even a little, it must have made you happy when he— Ah!" he cried, springing to his feet. "It drives me mad to think he ever kissed you!"

"He didn't!" cried Shirley, flaming with indignation. "I told him he mustn't dare even to kiss me—until, until we were married. You see I—I thought—I thought I shouldn't mind it then."

The amusing side of the situation failed to appeal to Shirley or to the man beside her.

Bending, he looked into her eyes. "And I?" said he. "Am I to wait until I marry you? What would you do if I should kiss you now?"

And Shirley Dean—she of the six-and-twenty rejected suitors—said soulfully and without the shadow of a smile: "I reckon I'd die of joy!"



Sanctuary

I DO not say your soul is carved
Into a house of prayer,
And that the candles of the Lord
Are lit forever there.

Nor yet is it a garden green
With strange exotics spread,
Heavy with odors of the East,
Or dark with roses red.

But rather is it just a room
Open to morning's light,
With windows looking to the sun,
All pure and clean and white;

A little room where vandal feet
Have never trod before,
Nor yet shall tread while strength is left
In me to guard the door.

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



"For What Hath the Wise More Than the Fool?"

By Dorothy Canfield

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY LEONARD

THE profound and universal truth underlying Æsop's fables, was never more clearly brought out than in the attitude of the people of West Milton to Amelia Hardy, the village seamstress. The old man and his son, who rode the donkey, first one, then another, then double, and ended by carrying the beast, received no more steady condemnation for their contradictory performances than did Miss Hardy for the various phases of her life.

At first, when she was a free and independent young spinster, she was criticised by the neighboring matrons, with the half-envious censure of the married for the irresponsible single, for the too great ease of her life, her shirking of ordinary human duties. She could earn a dollar and a half every

day she wanted to sew, and, beyond making enough to live on, she had no care in the world, and lived in idle and self-indulgent comfort in her own tiny cottage, working or not in her garden as she chose. The married women, bearing and raising children, and keeping house for difficult husbands, surveyed this sybarite's life with great disapprobation. They did not fail to make pointed remarks about "people who didn't know what work meant," every time they saw the shy, boneless, ineffectual little woman, whose hands were marked with no signs of labor save a pricked forefinger.

As the neighborhood all grew older together, values shifted, as they do with advancing years, and the married women began to reap the fruits of their

labors in the pleasant honors of matronhood, in well-trained children and thoroughly domesticated and tamed husbands. Amelia Hardy, no longer pretty even with the faint faded prettiness of her youth, all alone in the world, with no future to look forward to, received a half-contemptuous pity from the mistresses of the populous homes about her.

At thirty-five Miss Hardy acknowledged humbly the justice of their censure of her way of life by adopting a child, a little boy of six, left an orphan by the almost simultaneous death of his parents. So far from being appeased by this tacit bowing to their standards, by this silent act of submission, the neighborhood rose in an outcry of upbraiding. Amelia was beside herself to do such a foolish thing! How could she, a lone woman, bring up a man child? How could she earn enough to cover the added expense? And what possible motive could she have to interrupt a life of such comfort and ease? She was flying in the face of Providence! Miss Hardy kept her own counsel for long, under the insinuated questions, the only half-concealed wonder and disapprobation of her neighbors, until finally one day her hunted timidity turned at bay.

"I'm bringing up a child so I'll have somethin' to depend on in my old age," she cried, with a frightened defiance, to one of her critics. "Why ain't I got a right to as much as anybody? Look at all you've got—to grudge me one—and that not my own. I ain't so very strong, and my folks have always been the kind that sort o' give out and lose their grip about sixty. What'll become of me then, I'd like to know, if I ain't got somebody to look after me? I'm raising Sammy up to be a prop for my old age."

After this the matrons said that Amelia deserved no credit for what she was doing, that there was no charity in it—just a hard-headed business proposition; and they prophesied that she would get her pay for her selfish aims in the boy's turning out badly.

To avert this catastrophe they gave

her unceasing advice about the proper way to bring up her foster child. They all agreed that she was disgracefully lax in discipline and was spoiling Sammy as rapidly as possible. She worked twice as hard now, sewing out by the day and bringing home work to finish in the evenings; but she never demanded help from Sammy in the house-keeping. All the docile children of the neighborhood helped their exacting, bustling mothers, more or less unwillingly, but the adopted boy's playtimes were never broken into by demands for piling wood, or carrying ashes, or weeding the garden. He sometimes did one or another of these tasks, for he was an amiable child, but his help was fitful. He went to school dressed like most well-to-do boys in the village, and his Christmas presents were a scandal to the town. Remonstrances were plentiful and denunciatory, but the tired, happy little woman cut them short with a courageous curtness new to her. Since she was the head of a family she had a new dignity.

"No, Miss Martin, I know I don't set Sammy tasks to do, and I ain't a-going to. I want him to have the best kind of a time he can, and I want him to remember that I was good to him when I get old and dependent on him. You know he's *not* just any child. I'm a-raisin' him up to be a prop to my old age. And I want he should have a lovely time to look back on when he has to take care of me."

So, Sammy went to school, was a gentle, uninspired student, spending usually two years on a grade which other children passed in one, and knew unchecked all the pleasures of a New England village boy. As he grew into a tall, spindling youth, these pleasures were less and less innocuous. He "went with" a rough crowd of farmers' sons who came into the village on Saturdays, and all day Sundays hung about the livery stable and hotel back doors in sinister, lounging groups. Sammy was the constant companion of these rustic loafers, his slow wits and unsuspicious mind making him an invaluable butt for their pleasantries. He



Before morning Sammy had gone away with all the money there was in the house.

was easily bewildered, and several times the young brutes from the fields succeeded in getting him into situations which led to open ridicule and finally to scandal.

His foster mother held her head high before the unexpressed "I told you so" of her neighbors.

"Sammy is just sowing his wild oats," she declared. "Every boy has to do it—only Sammy's so open and unsuspecting that he can't hide it the way most do. I guess if you knew all your sons did! At least Sammy always tells me afterward—and he's so good to me."

Indeed the big, shambling young man was always kind to his benefactress. Even when he was a little drunk he was gentle, and he was always impelled to confess to her, with tears and contrition, as though he were still a child, the sordid and ugly little sins of his life. He worked spasmodically, too, between times, and always gave her what money he could get past the saloon with. Several times he was accused, rightly or wrongly, of petty thefts; and then the seamstress strained her eyes early and late over her sewing to make up the sums. The neighbors pitied her too much in these days to criticise her openly, but the manifest judgments of Providence were commented upon by all who knew her story, with a slightly patronizing approbation toward a deity who rewarded people so patiently according to their deserts. They felt that God was just, that He was doing what they would have done in His place. It was a real comfort to look around upon their own virtuous, well-trained families, the girls already with beaux, some even married, and the boys settling down to continue their father's lives.

Amelia Hardy, toiling over her seams, sitting alone in heart-breaking, long, and anxious solitudes, watching for an unsteady figure, and dreading she knew not what calamities, was an object of profound and self-congratulatory pity. Amelia herself was too busy to think much about her situation, but once in a while she compared these short days of toil and changing, dizzying emotions with the long, long empty days of her life before Sammy came into it. "I never knew rightly what it was to live in those times," she told herself.

One night the final catastrophe came. Sammy burst into the house after a three days' absence, sobered by a consuming fear, and flung himself in despair on the emaciated little figure sitting up in bed, a sickening apprehension widening her eyes and driving the blood from her lips.

Before morning Sammy had gone away with all the money there was in

the house, with resolutions to reform flowing from his facilely repentant lips, and with a supply of food, which Miss Hardy had sat up all night to prepare.

The next day she went down to the village bank, told the president that Sammy never meant to break into the bank and steal all that money, that he was made to do it when he wasn't quite himself, and that he never got a cent of it.

"Somebody else, Sammy wouldn't tell even who, got it all. But I'll see that the bank gets back every cent of it."

Thus at fifty-five began a new life for Amelia Harding; a life of solitude and isolation like her youth, but of incessant feverish toil. The sum was a large one, and it took her seven years to save it all. Every one thought she was unspeakably foolish to kill herself, paying a debt with which she had no connection. In the first place Sammy was no relation to her, and then he'd never had the money. He was safe presumably—at least so completely disappeared that even if the bank had wished to prosecute the worthless hulk they could not have found him—and there was no earthly reason why Amelia should make a spectacle of herself working so hard it was disagreeable to see her and distressing to think of her. She always had been a distressing element in the regular and comfortable neighborhood.

Amelia said once she was doing it to clear Sammy's name from disgrace—a statement which was received with contemptuous amusement by those who knew Sammy. Mrs. Martin said vigorously: "It was like trying to make a hogpen smell sweet by squirting cologne water in it, to try and clear Sammy's name."

When Miss Hardy was sixty-two the debt was paid. Sammy had vanished—she had not dared to have him write to her lest his hiding place be traced—and she was left in exactly the same condition as at thirty-five. The twenty-seven years since then might have been a dream, so utterly without visible results were they—visible results, that is, outside herself. In her worn face and

anæmic body, in her trembling hands and broken heart, she felt the years weigh heavily on her.

She had said that her race did not keep its vigor into old age, and she soon demonstrated this. With the last payment to the bank, her overwrought tension broke. She fell into a low fever through which she was tenderly nursed by her neighbors; and when she recovered she was an old woman. She had lost her grip, as she prophesied. She no longer cared about anything. She refused to sew, even for her old customers, unless driven by actual hunger or cold to earn a few dollars, and her work was so indifferently and absently done that it very soon was a more or less open charity to give her any.

She must have known this, the women about her having grown no more delicate with the passage of years, but she did not resent it. She lived on crackers and milk, and scraps sent in from the neighbors, and the little cottage was never cleaned from one

year's end to another. It became an eyesore to that part of town. After she was ill, the neighbor women talked for days about the condition of the house. They said it made them think of what they had read about the slums in the great cities. And to think of that being Amelia Hardy! However, she always earned enough to keep her from being actually a town charge, and a distant relation paid the minute taxes on her house.

At sixty-eight she was, as always, the steady topic of conversation of the neighborhood. The elderly matrons, grandmothers now, and uneasy in their new idleness of "old ladies," gathered over their knitting and futile fancy work, and reviewed again and again her perverse history, and told new stories about the state to which she had sunk. They lived with their children now mostly, and led lives of ease and leisure. They were not allowed to do any work, or take any part in the household plans. Everything was arranged for them with the same loving

care as for their grandchildren, and their old faces drooped in listless lines of aimless fretfulness as one empty meaningless day after another passed them slowly.

They were electrified one morning by the news that Sammy had come back, and they spent most of the day explaining to their curious grandchildren who had never heard of him, who was the sick, dirty old man at Miss Hardy's. For Sammy had come back as old as his foster mother, a wreck tossed up on the shore by storms of which the quiet,



He sank on a bench just inside the door.

peaceful village trembled to think, a piece of driftwood disfigured by tempests, the idea of which made them shudder. And he was sick. He had managed somehow to crawl back to the little cottage, but his strength had failed him once there, and the doctor said he was suffering from a complete nervous breakdown, due to dissipation and hardships.

Amelia Hardy refused all the proffered help of her old comrades.

"No, you'd be scared—he talks so rough when he's out of his head. But he always knows me and I kin always manage him. He won't *hev* anybody but me by him!"

The old woman slipped out in the evenings, after he had gone to sleep, and solicited work from her old customers with an unabashed demand. And all day she sat and sewed and told stories to the childish, sodden creature by the stove. She forced her old eyes and hands back to her old-time skill, and asked for more work with the proud certainty of a skilled and invaluable artisan. Sammy needed the best food and electric treatments, and she took an overweening and tonic pride in the expense he was to her.

In the spring she made garden for the first time in years, and varied her sewing with periods of labor in the fragrant earth. Sammy was too weak to help her—he had sunk into a sort of premature senility which the doctor said might last for years—but she took him out in his wheeled chair to sit close by, while she planted and hoed and talked baby talk to him. He cried so when she left him alone, she explained to visitors, conscious that their own absence from home might be indefinitely prolonged without disturbing the life of the household.

Once, as the old women of the neighborhood were putting their heads together over comfortable cups of tea, looking out upon Amelia Hardy toiling in her potato patch, it began to rain—a sudden, warm spring shower.

Amelia dropped her spade and ran to Sammy, whose grotesque face was twisted into an imbecile alarm of help-

lessness. She snatched off her skirt and put it over his head and shoulders, revealing a torn and dirty under-petticoat. Then breathlessly she began to push the heavy man toward the house. The wheels sank into the soft ground, and she had to bend forward with her arms out in a straining attitude of weak effort. Finally she reached the back door and, going round to the front of the chair, half lifted him out. He leaned almost his whole weight on her, and together they crept up the steps. He sank on a bench just inside the door, and she hustled out to bring in his wheeled chair.

The warm, soft rain fell in sparkling drops on her untidy white hair. Her face was full of important concern in her business. She dashed down to the cabbages and took off the boxes that had been turned over them to protect them from the sun. For a moment she stood by the wilting plants, watching the raindrops patter on them with the vicarious joy in their almost visible refreshment which all the old countrywomen inside the house knew so well. Then she turned her head as though in answer to a call from the house, nodded reassuringly, ran back and dragged the wheeled chair up the steps. Standing in the door, she drew the unwieldy thing up to her, its wheels bumping uncertainly from step to step till every woman watching her remembered how it used to feel to try and get the baby carriage up steps in a hurry.

Old Mrs. Martin drew a long breath.

"It does seem as though the Lord had it in for that poor Amelia Hardy! I used to think she got just what she deserved for her perversity in trying to bring up a boy alone, and then bein' so crazy silly about spoilin' him, never bein' willin' to take a bit of sensible advice. But I dunno. Seems as though she'd *had* her share. It makes me feel like cryin' when I remember what she told me she was raisin' Sammy up for."

"What did she say?" asked another.

"Why, she said—poor *thing*! She said: 'I'm a-raisin' Sammy up to be prop for my old age!'"



A GIRL'S CHANCE FOR WORK IN NEW YORK

By
Annette Austin

ILLUSTRATED BY
HARRIET ADAIR NEWCOMB

A YOUNG woman who was applying for a position as saleswoman in a fashionable millinery shop on Fifth Avenue, and had just been turned away for the fourth time with the reply that there was nothing for her, chanced to espy on her way out a shabby little old lady customer who was being snubbed by a haughty salesgirl. Something in the appearance of the customer told the girl who was hunting a job that she wanted to buy, and, on the spur of the moment, the girl saw a chance to convince the employer of her ability.

"Let me try that customer," she said briskly to the manager. "I bet I can sell her something." And without waiting for a reply, she whisked off her hat and approached the rather unpromising old lady in a simple, sweet, and gracious manner, saying: "Won't you let me help you select a hat? I have been watching you and I think I know exactly what you want."

The little old lady gave one look into that smiling, sympathetic countenance and became at once the willing victim to its charm and to that of the dozens of pretty quiet toques the girl pulled out for her. In the end, she purchased three hats, at a combined cost of one hundred dollars—and paid for them in cash.

II

"Well, Miss Mulvaney," said the manager to the girl, as the customer walked out, "you have certainly proved that you are an indispensable accessory to this business. We want just your kind of alertness and tact here, and as long as you can display those qualities we are willing to pay well to keep them, vacancy or no vacancy."

Many girls imagine that getting a position in the business world to-day is a matter of lucky chance, a trick of good looks or the effect of a mysterious "pull" with somebody in authority. As a matter of fact, pure, unadulterated *capability* is about the only thing necessary to work the charm, but it is by far the rarest product offered in the market by the thousands of girls who are yearly trying to break their way into industry in New York City.

It certainly does not do merely to ask for a job in any vocation these days. One has got to prove, by some diplomatic stroke or otherwise, that one is better than most people for the place. For instance, a lawyer, who had endured a long and exasperating string of incompetent men stenographers, was finally persuaded to try a woman in the place. He was plainly skeptical of the change. Women were flighty, he was assured, and they did not have the proper sense of business obligation in

subordinating all personal and social claims to their office duties.

A week after he had engaged a young woman, however, he happened to remark in her presence that he would give anything to remember the date of a client's last call.

"It was two weeks ago, on Thursday at three o'clock," answered the girl promptly, "and he came to see you about that rebate matter in the 'L and N'; and if you will remember, he called two days before that to ask your advice about selling the property in New Haven to the New Haven and Hartford; and on Saturday, three weeks ago, to consult you about the Symonds' deal."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the lawyer, utterly dumbfounded, "how do you remember all these dates and details?"

"It is a part of my profession to remember what goes on in the office and keep a written record of it," announced the girl proudly, and she showed a drawer by the side of her desk in which she kept a diary, indexed, of the professional visits, telephone calls, cases dispatched, and, in fact, every detail of office routine that transpired daily.

"It is too good to be true," raved the lawyer ecstatically. "A stenographer who thinks of her work as a profession, and a girl who is willing to do *more* than she is asked to do, is beyond my experience in human nature." Needless to add, a man typist never again invaded that official sanctum, and the girl who took her work "as a profession" was advanced year by year to a splendid salary.

Some vocations require that a girl shall evince what

Gelett Burgess has glibly termed the "sulphuric" temperament—a penchant for doing things differently from the common run of people—originality, in other words, or a perfect and serene naturalness.

A young Southern girl, who was trying for a place on the stage, went to interview a famous theatrical manager, noted for his curt disparagement of beginners. She was without experience, yet that was not absolutely against her; at least it was better than having attended a dramatic school. She was pretty, but neither was that an advantage, since hundreds of pretty girls besiege the doors of managers' offices every week.

After putting the usual questions as to where and how she had worked before and receiving the usual discouraging answers, the manager suddenly asked her to read a passage from a popular piece then playing on Broadway. It was the part of a young negress who, having been caught in the act and accused of stealing a pearl necklace from her mistress' drawer, breaks down and pleads for mercy, on the score that she did it for the sake of her children—

that they might have an education "like white folks."

The spirit of the reply was so manifestly an anachronism of negro character, as the Southern girl knew it, that she could not resist the impulse of her audacious answer.

"How would I do it?" she repeated, with a mischievous twinkle lighting her eyes. "Why, I'd do it like any sane nigger would—look up at him with eyeballs a-rollin' and say, 'No siree, I ain't stole no neck-



Something in the appearance of the customer told the girl that she wanted to buy.

lace. 'Deed and fo' Gawd, Mistah Barrow, I's jus' lookin' at hit.'"

That was sufficient for the manager. He knew that any girl with such a sense of humor and the courage to be natural under all circumstances would put character into anything she did, and he accepted her. But many another girl would have lost out on this chance through sheer lack of courage to criticise the established order of things. Here is where the more spontaneous Southern or Western girl has a distinct advantage over the spiritually repressed city girl of the East.

Self-confidence is an indispensable quality of success in seeking a position.

A young woman physician who had won a place as ambulance surgeon in a large city hospital through competitive examination before her sex was known, was afterward being relentlessly quizzed by the astonished board of examiners as to her ability to fill a position which was to them so essentially masculine. There would be all kinds of awkward situations, they said; not so much contingent upon the professional duties, as on the social obligations of the office. How *would* she get round these thousand and one unwritten laws in the matter of eating and drinking and smoking with the other internes—and *where* would she keep her clothes?

But to all of the dismayed interrogations the little doctor returned unperturbed answers. She was quite equal to the occasion of keeping her clothes in a matchbox if necessary. She could dress in the ambulance, in the



She has been used for centuries to pottering about at her leisure and to scattering her forces over a variety of things.

kitchen, or in the sterilizing machine—she could bathe in a tin cup. She could—yes, indeed, she *would* learn to play poker, too, if that were one of the requirements of holding down the position.

They couldn't stump her on a thing, even to the smoking of an occasional cigarette as a matter of sociability—if it would keep the wheels running smoothly—and she won the place finally out of sheer inability to be "downed."

Men like to know that women can accommodate

themselves to the inconveniences of business life. They want to feel insured against any disturbing outbursts of emotional frenzy, which are traditional attributes of the domestic sphere. They want in an office a woman who can work under pressure and who can endure calmly or ignore sensibly the noise, the dirt, the roughness, and, perhaps, even the profanity of their own occasional manly emotional outbursts when great mental stress precipitates them. They do not want to make the woman "one of themselves" and they are never consciously rude or cruel, but one thing is inexorable; she must not retard business dispatch by the interpolation of feminine peculiarities of temperament, of manner, or of speech.

Punctuality is an important requisite of business success which comes harder to the woman than the need for adaptability. She has been used for centuries to pottering about at her leisure and to scattering her forces over a variety of things. In business she must concentrate on one thing and do that punctually.



She went back to England and took a place as nursery governess.

The girl who comes and goes "on the dot"—no matter how much she may dawdle in between times—is apt to be looked on with favor in the business world. Many a good worker has been supplanted by an indifferent worker, merely because she persisted in strolling into the office at eleven o'clock instead of being *on the spot* at nine.

On the other hand, a tendency to the other extreme—an excess of conscientiousness—is regarded as a sign of stupidity. No employer wants a "grind" or a "plug" in any position if he can get somebody else with more originality. A certain editor, speaking of a woman whom he did *not* want as an assistant, characterized her contemptuously as a person who "would sit and watch a rat hole all day without moving" if set the task. Employers respect a spirit of independence when it has its root in a sturdy confidence in one's own ability. They are likely to make openings for advancement for such a person because they have come to rely on her judgment, largely because she relies on it herself, but they

are relentless in putting down conceit or anything that approaches bombast.

A young woman, just out of college and rather overburdened with a good opinion of herself, was recently trying very hard to force her services on the editorial staff of a prominent monthly magazine. She had had no office experience of any sort, and the extent of her editorial career was a few months with a college paper. Nevertheless, she assured the editor that she was a valuable person to engage early, for, said she, "One does not often find a girl of my social position together with a thorough college training going in for this sort of work."

The editor, somewhat nonplussed at this remarkable statement, asked her if she had ever had anything published.

"No," she admitted, "but that was hardly necessary, was it?"

"Rather," conceded the editor dryly, "and I hardly see how you could expect us to pay you for your time while you are learning to write."

This implication, naturally, the young woman resented. She knew how to

write, and, furthermore, she knew how to criticise what was written. There ought to be something for her on that magazine.

In spite of the girl's arrogance, there was a good deal in her favor, and the editor was a forbearing and charitable man. After a little further interrogation, he decided to give her a trial as a reader, and mentioned a moderate but eminently fair salary in consideration of her inexperience. It was then that the girl flared up and burned her chances to a crisp.

"Oh, I couldn't *begin* to consider such a pittance as that," she announced airily. "I'm worth twice that, if I'm worth anything, and I couldn't come for less."

"Then you need not come at all, my dear young lady," the editor told her quietly, and ushered her out before she had time to think.

In all likelihood, if the girl had accepted the post, her salary would have been increased as soon as she was found capable to do the work. But by her penny-wise, pound-foolish policy of overrating herself she lost the valuable opportunity of a start with a first-class house, and left behind her, as well, an odious opinion of college girls in general, which was not calculated to make the path of the next girl applying any easier.

Most girls show very plainly after five minutes' talk with an employer whether they are fitted to carry on the work for which they are applying satisfactorily or not. The flighty, careless girl is sure to bear the marks of her slipshod ways in her dress or her speech or her manner. There are loose buttons hanging from her coat, perhaps, or a showy, expensive

hat topping an unkempt pompadour. She is eager and voluminous in her speech, but vague in her answers, anxious to impress with her ability, but unable to state definitely any piece of work that she has actually accomplished. She would be amiable, doubtless, and faithful to the post, but she suggests a path strewn with mistakes and hairpins.

The girl with affected, fastidious manners is an equally dangerous proposition to the employer. She is refined and neat, but she may upset the office equilibrium any day with her "artistic temperament" in a spell of "the blues." There are other undesirable types in the flirtatious girl with her restless eye, the giggling girl, the flip girl, and the girl with a chronic chip on her shoulder, all known to the interviewer by their unmistakable hall-marks. But over against them all, in refreshing contrast, is the girl who will *do*; and one recognizes her instantly by her bright, sane, and sensible demeanor.

The girl who "fills the bill" for most



Acting as chaperon in some girls' boarding school.

employers has no illusions about her place in the industrial or social scheme. She offers herself as a worker worthy of her hire, and she expects respectful treatment as a lady—and gets it—and that's all there is to it. There is no affectation in her speech or manner. She is direct and to the point in conversation; she is cheerful of countenance; she is neat in appearance. Her clothes are the best of the kind she can afford, but they are quiet in color and devoid of showy ornament. She is calm and self-possessed in bearing. Knowing her subject thoroughly and the amount of remuneration it usually brings in, she can answer interrogations intelligently and make her demands confidently. She is willing to concede a spirit of fairness on the part of the employer to pay her what she is worth to him. At any rate, she knows that she can better afford to risk disappointment than to show a spirit of avarice and impatient greed in regard to cash compensation.

The cause of a good many failures among really capable girls who are hunting work in the city is a lack of moral backbone; not of morals in the narrow sense, but of the ability to keep the *right thought uppermost*, according to the mental scientists. Mediocre talent is so indelibly associated with persistence that many geniuses would rather forfeit fame than fight for it, but nevertheless, it is often the mediocre worker who gets the job through sheer bombardment of the employer's stronghold, when a worthier applicant languishes unrecognized because he doesn't combine spunk or perseverance with his other useful qualities.

A talented English girl who came to America to succeed at music teaching went around to several prominent families, to whom she had been given flattering letters of introduction, to ask for their children as pupils. It was the beginning of summer time when everybody was preparing to flit, and, furthermore, it was just after the great financial depression. Mothers were interested but uncertain. They were impressed by the young lady's credentials

and anxious to patronize her, but all they could say was: "Come to see me again in the fall." Any right-minded girl would have gone again in the fall, but this girl was discouraged by her first attempts and did not go. "They just said that to get rid of me," was her pessimistic comment.

Then she tried newspapers for musical criticism. In almost every instance editors were cordially anxious to help her. "We've all our places filled just now," they explained kindly, "but call again in a few weeks. There is no telling when there may be an opening, and we'd like to keep you in mind." But the girl never called again. "They didn't mean it," she persisted gloomily. "There wasn't the ghost of a chance that I would get a different answer if I *did* go again."

And so she failed—failed utterly—dropped out of the race like a spent swimmer before she had made two strokes. She went back to England and took a place as nursery governess—this girl, who was a brilliant graduate of the Royal Academy, who had had some of the finest names in the musical profession on her testimonials, and who possessed a personality altogether charming! What is one to do with a woman who so deliberately murders her chances by a pessimistic outlook?

Lack of "backbone" is especially to be noted among girls in the artistic professions. A breezy Western girl who lived for several months among a colony of dramatic, music, and art students told some amusing and pathetic stories of the futile and foolish attempts of these girls to make a living—starting out so buoyantly, making one weak stroke, and dreaming out the rest of the day on a park bench.

Her own sturdy struggle against circumstances, beginning at the bottom and working up through several forms of industrial drudgery to her final well-paid position in a publishing house, was very different and is worth retailing.

She came to New York from San Francisco, where she had kept a little private school after two years spent in the State university, determined to get

out of the loathed occupation of teaching, and yet knowing nothing else and with nothing to stand between herself and disaster except a few savings and a naturally buoyant temperament.

She began by applying to newspapers and magazines for work, but discouraged by persistent rebuffs drifted gradually down to the shops. With her pride in her pocket she finally accepted a place in a millinery shop, where she was put to work at the rudiments of making hat bands and earned four dollars a week when she was clever. One week of this was enough, and yet she had learned much of human nature here and profited by the experience.

Her second venture was in a department store. It was a large department store with a mammoth mail-order business, and she was to write the fashion letter for the catalogue and get ten dollars a week. Eight of this she paid out for board six miles from the store, and the rest for lunches and carfare. Two months afterward, she learned of similar work to be had on a woman's magazine in the pattern department, and she went there, with a slight increase in salary. From there, it was an easy step to the business department of another magazine, and thence to the art department of a large publishing company.

In the case of this girl, who was working toward no definite artistic or professional goal, it was wise to take temporary work of any kind. Every bit of experience was helpful to her, and she could move from one vocation to another without that desperate feeling of losing time that the artist knows. Furthermore, no girl with a college education need ever fear that she will not fall into congenial and remunerative work sooner or later; her training is always in demand. But for the girl who expects to do creative work, who wants to get on at painting or writing, the advisability of doing hack work is questionable.

There have been girls who could work all day at teaching or stenography and write stories at night, but they were not good stories, and nobody knew it



If one is clever with the brush, there is quite a little to be made painting dinner-cards.

better than the tired girl herself from the depths of her aching neuralgic consciousness. There are artist girls now doing "pot boilers" in the shape of bi-weekly settlement classes and tri-weekly bookkeeping, and as long as they can steal a few moments of freedom from the drudgery, they manage to stick it out, but they don't sell many pictures.

Routine work of any kind saps the vitality and stultifies ambition. The girl who would do good creative work needs leisure to associate with her fellows, to study, to observe, and to grow. Nobody can grow in the time left after eight hours a day for six days in the week spent in an office. One can merely recuperate a little of what has been lost.

The best plan, therefore, for the girl who would come to the city to earn her living at art or free-lance journalism, is to save up enough money to see her safely through the first six months, at least, of trial, and then, while she is "learning the ropes," to look out for one of the very few part-time positions to be had.

There are so few of these half-time posts, that it is hardly worth while to mention them as hopes, but occasionally one hears of an energetic girl acting as chaperon in some girls' boarding school and making her running expenses by it. Then, there are the social settlement houses, where one may live for four or five dollars a week or for nothing in exchange for a few evenings a week of teaching or reading aloud. If one is clever with the brush, there is quite a little to be made painting dinner cards or designing book plates on order from booksellers. And there is the post of professional substitute in bridge whist at three dollars an hour, and professional posing—for advertisements or artists—which brings in the same amount.

There is the inevitable private tutoring, which is very hard to get, and book reviewing, which is still more precarious. Lastly, there is the ever alluring path of newspaper reporting; but here no girl will enter under the delusion that it will lead to higher fields of authorship, for it won't. On the whole, the first years in the city are lean and hungry ones for the budding artist or author, and it is a wise girl who decides to break into the competition gradually through the medium of work submitted from home.

The same advice applies to girls in lower grades of work. In dressmaking, millinery, factory work, salesmanship, and the trades of printing and bookbinding, previous practical experience or a thorough training in an industrial school is coming more and more to be demanded as necessary for entrance. In many of the manual trades, immigrant girls are fast pushing out the American-born competitors, because they can live on half the wages. And the long stretches of slack seasons, which throw girls out of work for from two to six months, make it next to impossible for the girl who has to pay her board out of her earnings to survive.

It is well for girls in the country to understand this; that there is no place in the city for the untrained or unspecialized workwoman, and even for one of exceptional ability self-support in any trade is difficult and uncertain unless one has a knowledge of some subsidiary work with which to bridge over the dull season.

On the other hand, for the exceptional worker, for the girl with superior talent, superior education, superior energy, and a constitution like the walls of China, New York offers chances for success unequaled in any other city.





A DIPLOMATIC CONSEQUENCE

BY EMMA LEE WALTON

ILLUSTRATED BY R. EMMETT OWEN

BRIDGET O'NEIL slammed her flatiron down on the stove and turned testily to answer the back doorbell. Seven peddlers and three book agents had rung it already that self-same morning, and the busiest day of the week, too. The mistress was so inconsiderate as to have a party on ironing day; and there was more to be done than a little, yet, and the lady gone to town. A forsaken house it was, called by the heathen name of bungalow, and nobody worth a second thought in the whole village; while the town house was a gem of convenience within easy walking distance of an army post on a Thursday afternoon. They did say Miss Isabel was to marry a soldier, too.

The peddler began to pound, as impatient at her delay as if he had paid a dollar for a ticket of admission, and Bridget quickened her pace unconsciously. The man was a Jew, dictatorial and sharp, with buttons to sell.

"I gan't sthand here all day," he growled. "Vat you not mak'g haste vor, eh?"

"Sure we don't want no buttons," Bridget snapped. "We leddies use hooks. Now, you clear out."

"I aind't to talk mit no Irish voman," he returned scornfully. "Vere iss der lady off der house?"

"She is out. Now go 'long, bad cess to you! I got me workk to do."

"Oudt?" laughed the man. "Same olt thing. She iss nodd oudt, no, she iss nodd. Gall her here yet."

Bridget O'Neil tried to close the door in his face, but he was quicker than she, and his foot was instantly placed in the hinge, his clumsy half-sole successfully defying force. Bridget regarded the sneering face doubtfully for a moment, thinking it might be necessary to summon Miss Isabel, and then an inspiration of greater power than she dreamed came to her suddenly and with blinding force. She leaned forward, the better to whisper her message, looking furtively about as she did so.

"The missis is sick," she said solemnly. "But we don't want for annything to be said about it, sure, for fear they'll be shutting us up. It's after being the shmall poxes she's got, too."

The man gave her one startled glance and then, gathering up his open boxes as best he could, he took to his heels down the path, scattering buttons of all sizes and descriptions in his wake.

He did not stop until he reached the gate, where he closed his sample boxes and, without so much as a glance behind, strode rapidly away up the road.

One man that morning had talked his wares for forty minutes, so it was a distinct triumph in diplomacy that this one should go so soon. Bridget chuckled to herself over the success of her ruse as she went back to her ironing, and then speedily forgot all about it. She was prolific in ideas and could afford to forget them as soon as they were used or the least bit shopworn. She had heard that morning of the smallpox scare in the next village, and

nothing was easier for one who was acquainted with the contagious nature of the disease, than to give it freely and fully to Mrs. Bancroft. The methods of genius are oftentimes simple.

Toward noon Miss Isabel hurried out to the kitchen.

"Bridget, oh, Bridget!" she cried. "What is the matter with the grocery-man?"

"The matter, miss? He's late, sure."

Miss Isabel pointed dramatically toward the window through which they could see the grocer's boy gesticulating frantically to them. Delighted at having attracted their notice, he set a sack



"It's after being the shmall poxes she's got, too!"

of flour down on the path and piled upon it a peck of potatoes, a bottle of vinegar, some apples, a can of baking powder, and a pound of butter.

"It looks like a harvest home," Miss Isabel said. "Do go and tell him to bring them in."

Bridget went, but as soon as she put her foot on the path the boy jumped into his wagon and drove off in unseemly haste, disregarding her hail and ignoring her peremptory commands. It took them ten minutes to gather up the potatoes and bring the things in, and Miss Isabel was really angry.

"They think they can do as they please because we're strangers here," she said. "Mother's always wanted to live out in the wilds, so I hope she likes it."

"It's the bugaboo I'm not after liking myself, miss."

"The what?"

"The house, mum. It's so haythen-ish according to my taste, miss."

"I like the view from out here on the back porch," Miss Isabel said. "Why, Bridget, why on earth didn't you let the florist in?"

"Would he be after ringing, miss? I ain't heard a sight of him."

"Maybe he'll come again. He's driving down the road now, and from the way he looked around I thought maybe he couldn't get in. I'm too hungry to think about anything but luncheon, yet."

Miss Isabel took little interest in the party, and small wonder. Her mother was that set on her marrying an army officer, and she wanted to marry a common civilian in the village. The captain would be at the party, but Mr. Fuller was not asked, and Miss Isabel hadn't seen him or heard from him for a week, though it was rumored that he had followed them to Idlewild just to be near her. Bridget knew Mrs. Bancroft's passion for position and sympathized on account of the shoulder knots, but she nevertheless had a warm feeling for the forlorn girl and plied her with every dainty bit the larder afforded, seeking to tempt her appetite.

There were forgotten candles to buy, so after luncheon Miss Isabel put on

her hat to go to the village. At the door she turned back.

"I don't believe our bell rings, Bridget," she said. "Here the caterer's been and gone, and the refreshments are out on the porch. You listen while I push the button."

The bell rang with beautiful clearness, and Miss Isabel closed the door behind her, much puzzled and bewildered. Wasn't it the custom to deliver things at the door in Idlewild? Bridget, gathering the parcels in her capacious arms, volunteered no explanation, and her mistress, unaware of the light that was beginning to dawn on the inner consciousness of her maid servant, was more than a little bothered by the actions of the village deliverymen.

As she came down the steps three men rose from the tiny lawn and called to her in peremptory tones, voices of authority however brief.

"Halt!" said they. "Stop where you are!"

As one of them held a rifle, Isabel was under the impression that she was being held up, and raised her hands over her head.

"Take anything I have," she said tremulously. "But please leave me my handkerchief; I have such a cold."

"You mistake, Miss Bancroft," one man called. "We don't want to rob you. We've been sent here by the mayor."

Visions of kidnapping by Italian noblemen flashed into her mind, but a second illuminating memory vision of the mayor reassured her. Not with a nose like his!

"Oh, then I'll come over there and talk it over with you," she said, in great relief. "I met him at a dance. Wait, I'm coming."

The men retreated as she advanced, and seemed to be ready to take to the woods. Isabel wondered if she were so ferocious looking as all that, and was rather pleased at the effect she was having.

"You stay where you are!" they shouted in unison. "There's smallpox in your house, and we're the vigilance committee to protect the village."

"What foolishness!" she cried, stamping her foot. "It's no such thing!"

She started to stroll off unconcernedly, but a raised rifle is an unanswerable argument, and she stopped quite suddenly. The three men were now supported by quite a company of men, women, and children from nearby, and their insistent demand was that she should go into the house. Discretion being the better part of valor, she retreated to the porch and held a parley with them, while a brave boy planted a violent yellow flag in the geranium bed.

"We're all as well as you are," she said impatiently. "I can't prove it to you, because mother's gone to town for the whole day."

A murmur of disbelief rose from the crowd.

"That's the way it spread in Slaterville," a woman announced shrilly. "They kept a-going to town even after they was sick, and when they was in bed they said they wasn't."

"If your ma ain't sick bring her out," one of the original three demanded. "It's show up or shut up. You can't pull the wool over our eyes. No, *sir!*"

"We ain't a-going to have no smallpox in our town, you bet!" said another. "Not if we know ourselves!"

"New folks allers thinks they owns the town," a woman remarked audibly. "The poor ones hang around the s'loons and get bossy, and the rich ones make bric-à-brac houses and raise prices. I suppose her ma caught it in Slaterville. I seen her there Saturday."

"If your ma's gone to town," spoke up one, reckoned shrewd, "did she walk? The station agent says there ain't a soul taken a train to-day."

"She went in the automobile," Isabel said, hating herself for descending to explanations. "We have two here."

"I seen her man in the village," a man said scornfully. "He was buying a cigar and he says to the clerk, he says, 'I'm the new lady's shover,' he says, just like that."

Isabel could stand no more and retreated to the house, slamming the door behind her to relieve her feelings as

much as possible. It seemed perfectly hopeless to make those people understand, so she must try to find an alibi for the smallpox. She tried to catch her mother on the telephone, but Mrs. Bancroft had finished her shopping, and there was no way to guess where else she was going; so Isabel gave it up.

The ironing finished, Bridget came in sociably, to keep her company, and they watched from behind the parlor curtains in dull misery. Bridget realized the full consequences of her rash act, but she would not confess, hoping optimistically that some lucky chance would clear up the trouble without involving her. If the peddler had spread the story it was surely not her fault, or if people insisted on living in bugaboos out in the woods they must expect to have things said of them. After all, that crowd would not believe her if she told them the truth, for sane folks did not usually claim unattractive things like the smallpox unless they had to, and she wished to be considered as still in full possession of all her faculties.

Some of the crowd, trampling the lawn, were making the most of the opportunity offered for picnics, depositing their eggshells and boxes in the fountain; but others contented themselves with picking flowers and experimenting with little stones and the windows. They seemed to have the idea that the household, having disregarded the law, need expect no protection from it against any form of vandalism they might wish to practice.

"I feel like a French Revolution and Marie Antoinette," Isabel sighed dolefully. "If we could only get hold of a doctor!"

"I'd wring his neck!" Bridget cried, with the fierceness of the guilty. "It was probably after being some auld docter that shtarted the shtory."

"How foolish, Bridget! What did mother say about coming home?"

"Nary word. Land only knows, mum. In toime for the parrty to-night, I'm trusting."

"Of course, but we aren't ready for the reception, and they won't let any-



"What foolishness!" she cried, stamping her foot. "It's no such thing!"

body come in anyhow. Oh, how I hope they'll threaten Captain Porter with that rifle!"

The miserable afternoon wore away, and Isabel was finding some amusement in betting to herself as to what villagers would appear in the changing crowd next, when the whir of an automobile sounded along the road. It was evident from the sudden increase in the crowd's interest that it was some one

of importance, so she and Bridget hurried out on the porch to see. People who had started to go away came running back, but they all drew away and left the runabout ample room to turn in on the roadway. The lady in it seemed much alarmed.

"Where's the fire department?" she cried anxiously. "Who's killed? Don't keep it from me, tell me right away!"

"Don't be frightened, mother," Isabel

called from the porch. "It's just a misunderstanding."

"What's the crowd for?" Mrs. Bancroft queried. "What are they misunderstanding? These are not our friends."

The horrible thought seemed to have come to her that the guests had mistaken the reception hour, and Isabel knew how her thoughts must have flown at once to the caterer and the probably undusted tops of things. Mrs. Bancroft motioned to one of the committee to help her out the runabout, but he drew away and put his hands behind his back.

"No, ma'am," he said from a distance. "You've got smallpox. Go on up to the porch!"

"What insolence! Smallpox nothing!" the irate lady cried. "Do I look like an invalid? Come close and look at me."

"Not me," said the committeeman. "Ask Silas, here."

Mrs. Bancroft, getting down by herself with surprising agility, joined her daughter on the porch, where an explanation made the matter clearer to her.

"It's perfect foolishness," she said, addressing the crowd. "Do you suppose I'd be so silly as to have smallpox when I'm giving a large reception to-night?"

"I'm sure I do no', mum," the man replied slowly. "There ain't any particular smartness shown by living in one of them humpbacked houses, I must say."

"It is immaterial to me what you think of the house," Mrs. Bancroft said haughtily. "But I warn you I shall entertain one hundred people here this evening just the same."

"Very well," said another man. "But if you ain't been proved to have no smallpox by then, the hospital will be a-entertaining of the folks first, ma'am."

He patted his rifle, and the crowd laughed even when they did not catch the shouted reply. Mrs. Bancroft consulted her daughter. Isabel's independent spirit was crushed, and she favored

conciliation, with the fervor of a Burke. Bridget, conscious of a guilty soul and chilled by the autumn breeze, had sought the warmth and security of the kitchen, and they missed the inspiration of her righteous anger.

Mrs. Bancroft, uninspired, turned to the people again, like Madame Roland on her scaffold.

"We are going to leave here in two days," she said. "But I must give this reception to-night. Now, what are you going to do? Stay there all night?"

"We're waiting for the president of the board of health," some one answered. "He's been out of town all day."

"Then can't you help us?" she asked meekly. "What would you suggest?"

"You might phone the board and see if he's back yet."

Isabel hurried in, glad of the relief from inaction, and telephoned the village hall and the health department. When she came out she seemed much relieved, and perched on the railing with a pink scarf on her shoulder that reflected its color in her cheeks. The only message she brought was that the health officer would come by and by, but she looked so pleased that her mother found her amusement ill-timed and was resentful.

"Anybody'd think it was a vaudeville," she said testily. "I'd give anything to be out of this and rid of those vulgar people. You never did sympathize with my feeling in such matters."

It was almost dark when a shout from the small boys announced the coming of the health officer. He walked briskly along the gravel road, and stopped a moment to consult with the committee. Then, tall and commanding, young and broad, and astonishingly fearless, he came up the path and stood before Mrs. Bancroft and her daughter, hat in hand.

"What trick is this?" Mrs. Bancroft asked angrily. "Did I not forbid you the house, Doctor Fuller?"

"You cannot, I regret to say," the young man replied smoothly. "I represent, in the County of Slater, the



"Or I come to your reception to be announced as Isabel's fiancé."

commonwealths of Slaterville and Idlewild, and I claim a very perfect right to enter as I please. I am the president of the board of health."

"Since when, may I ask?"

"Since last Thursday, election day," he responded cheerfully. "Shall we go into the parlor, madam?"

Mrs. Bancroft haughtily motioned her daughter in before her and, followed by the young man, went in and closed the door. In the parlor the physician disdained a chair, but stood at the table, earnest and fearless, to command the situation.

"Things have so turned out that I have at last an advantage after all my months of waiting and hoping, Mrs. Bancroft," he said easily. "And I can give you a choice between two courses. Either those men turn back your guests to-night or"—his eyes wandered to Isabel and his lips twitched—"or I come

to your reception to be announced as Isabel's fiancé."

"Impossible!" Mrs. Bancroft cried. "Utterly out of the question, sir!"

"Oh, very well," he said quietly. "I shall give orders accordingly, then."

His hand was on the doorknob when Mrs. Bancroft found her voice. It was all so sudden she could not grasp its meaning, but a vision of her departing guests and her own humiliation filled her mind, and she felt there was nothing for it but capitulation.

"No, no, come back," she said hastily, temporizing in the hope that her usually quick wit would help her out. "I merely meant that Isabel has recovered entirely from her infatuation for you, and therefore is perfectly willing to marry the man of my choice."

The new president of the board of health held out his hand, and Isabel put hers into it without a word.

"Telephones are a great invention, Mrs. Bancroft," he said, with apparent irrelevance. "Have you anything else to say?"

Words failed her for the moment, so she waved her hand in crushed dissent. For fear she would change her mind, the health officer waited a moment.

"Go on," she said weakly. "Go ahead. You are not exactly a stupid young man and, after all, there never was anything against you but your lack of prominence. I declare, I begin to understand what Isabel sees in you after all."

When Mrs. Bancroft had freed herself from her daughter's embrace and had sent her out to help the president

of the board of health dismiss the uninvited guests, she opened the kitchen door to speak to Bridget, cringing in a corner.

"Bridget, sit up!" she said severely. "Nobody's going to kill you! Those people have gone now. I wanted to tell you to set an extra place at dinner for Doctor Fuller, do you hear?"

There was some doubt in her mind as to how Bridget would receive the order, for maids give warning under the stress of too much company, but Bridget behaved in a most peculiar fashion never to be explained.

"The saints be praised!" she cried rapturously. "The saints be praised, for ain't I a-getting off aisy, though!"



The Tramp

A COUPLE of tramps ever ranging the road—
The vagabond wind and I;
In the bloom o' the morn and at twilight forlorn,
And eke when the moon swings high.

What matter who passes us by i' the road?
Who minds their grimaces or stares?
The bludgeoning knave or the work-a-day slave,
Or milord or milady—— Who cares?

Will they plunder our purses or tax us for gold,
Or sue for a favor we owe?
Who'll bother a tramp and a fugitive scamp,
Or claim us as friend or as foe?

But "it's Dick o' the Dust and Will o' the Wind,"
They say as they mumble along;
And all of them know that we come and we go
With only a burden of song.

Then it's, oh, for the sting and the thrill of the air
And the glare of the road dust white!
And it's up and away at the peep o' the day
And away in the depth o' the night!

And ever a song to each other we sing,
Myself and the vagabond wind:
"It's, oh, for the rest that we never possessed,
And the home that we never shall find!"

WILLIAM F. McCORMACK.



BY MARY C. FRANCIS.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. A. LEMON

SALLY, Sally," pleaded the young fellow, "don't be foolish. I know I kissed Betty more than once in the forfeit game, but I only did it to devil Jim Miller. You know yourself what a flirt Betty is."

"That's all very well, Mr. Jack Morrison," said the girl coldly. "I guess you kissed her because you wanted to all right, and if you think I'm going to stand such conduct——"

"Look here, Sally," broke in the young man, "we might as well come to an understanding right now. You've been unreasonable about two or three little things lately, and if we are going to live together happily after we are married——"

"After we are married!" cried the girl, her hysterical anger rising in a sudden and overwhelming flood. "Don't be too sure we're going to be married! I may change my mind about that."

The young man did not reply at once. Instead he thrust his hands deep into his pockets and looked straight at her.

It was half-past ten on a cold winter's night, and the full moon shone gloriously through the firs, sparkling across the snow and shining full in the face of the girl who stood just inside of the gate, a face of considerable charm if not of great beauty, and just now illumined by the uncanny fires of jealous anger.

Jack Morrison looked at the face for

several minutes; then, with an inward masculine sense of mastery, said coolly:

"Well, Sally, have you changed it?"

The tone, even more than the words, was fatal. In those few moments of silence Sally Peters knew, as she never knew before, that she loved Jack Morrison to the very depths of her soul, and just as the old longing to feel his arms about her rose to a flood-tide, he spoke.

The words shocked her into her first mood.

"Yes, I have!" she snapped.

"All right," said Jack, turning indifferently. "When you change it back again let me know."

He wheeled quickly and went whistling down the road. Sally stood petrified until his form was lost in the shadow of the firs. Then she went up to her room and cried herself to sleep.

A week later everybody in Greenville knew that Jack Morrison and Sally Peters had quarreled and that Jack had gone out to Arizona to make his fortune. Jim Miller promptly seized the auspicious moment to inform Betty Powers that she could take him now or never, and led her, meek and submissive, to the matrimonial altar. Sally stood the loneliness and silence, the smiles aside and the whispered comments, for three long and dreary months, and then she wrote to Jack.

Three more months of silence passed,



With an inward masculine sense of mastery, said coolly: "Well, Sally, have you changed it?"

and then one morning Betty Miller dropped in and said casually:

"Have you heard the news, Sally? Jack Morrison is married."

II.

Twenty years later even the oldest inhabitant could see little, if any, change in Greenville. True, some people were twenty years older, but that had happened day by day, and was taken for granted.

Miss Sarah Peters, long since left

alone in the world, had for many years conducted Greenville's highest class boarding-house, and her eminent respectability and her excellent business capacity had made her a leader in the church and a person of admirable resources in the community. Also, aside from these facts, the romance of Miss Sarah's youth and her steadfast devotion to her young lover were known to every man, woman and child; and what was commonly called Miss Sarah's fidelity to an ideal had been accepted as final by all who knew her.

In fact, there was a sort of halo about Miss Sarah, and the unbroken silence she kept on the subject only served to add to a semisacred mystery that involved the whole affair. Even Betty Miller had never been able to tell more than that on the morning she imparted the news Sally had looked straight ahead of her and said she was very glad to hear it.

But now Greenville was excited as never before, for on that lovely spring morning of twenty years later Miss Sarah had dropped in at Betty's and said in an offhand way:

"I got a letter from Jack Morrison this morning."

"For the land's sake, Sally!" shouted Betty, "tell me

all about it!"

And then Miss Sarah, smiling enigmatically, replied: "Oh, there isn't anything to tell, Betty."

But if Miss Sarah told nothing for the next six weeks, the postmaster did, and everybody knew once more that Sally Peters and Jack Morrison were writing to each other by every mail. Also, by the time the Greenville postmaster got a reply from the Arizona postmaster, and told that Jack's wife was dead, there was only one thing to

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believe, and all Greenville believed it, especially as Miss Sarah bought a new gown and took to waving her front hair.

But matters could not go on this way forever, and when the first city people came out in the latter part of May looking for country board for the summer, Miss Sarah declined to take them, and told why.

"On the first of June I give up taking boarders, sell out and go West to be married to Mr. Morrison," she said, in her usual direct fashion to all her friends. Then she added, with true feminine magnanimity: "It was all my fault years ago, and no other man could ever be the ideal to me that Jack has been all these years. There never was any other man in the world for me but him, and now"—she paused modestly—"now I love not only him, but his children, his poor, motherless babies, as he calls them in his letters."

Betty Miller lifted her youngest offspring off the work-basket and set him on the floor with an injunction to "stay there," and then she said: "By the way, Sally, how many children has Jack?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Miss Sarah serenely; "and it wouldn't make any difference, anyhow."

"Well, of all the things!" said Betty. "I've been married twenty years myself, Sally, and we have five children. And I'll tell you another thing, a man can change a lot in twenty years."

"I suppose so," said Miss Sarah icily, "but Jack Morrison could only change for the better."

III.

The train sped away into the yellow distance of the Arizona desert, and Miss Sarah, her heart palpitating violently and her knees shaking under her, stood half-terrified on the platform. The utter strangeness and solitude of the latter part of the long journey had told severely on her self-possession, and she was quaking with unknown apprehensions so palpably that the conductor, surmising the truth, had talked

with her that morning and assured her that people didn't mind it when they got used to it.

Before she could draw her second breath, a tall, almost rough-looking man with a beard jumped out of a lumbering wagon that drew up at the moment, and, crossing the platform in great strides, took her in his arms and kissed her squarely on the mouth, exhaling as he did so a breath strongly redolent of tobacco.

"Hello, Sally," he cried. "So you got here at last, did you?"

Dazed and unstrung, Miss Sarah gazed incredulously at him, a man no more like the Jack Morrison of her girlhood days than Samson could be like Apollo.

"Jack!" she faltered incredulously.

"Of course!" assented the stranger, in a deep bass voice. "Didn't know me at first, did you? I don't know as I'd have known you, either, if I hadn't knowed you was coming. You've gone off a lot in your looks, Sally—not that I'm complaining. You'll ketch up out on the ranch. Why, what's the matter?"

"I feel faint!" gasped Miss Sarah.

"Here, set down here, and take a drop of this." He drew from his pocket a huge black bottle and held it to Miss Sarah's lips. She shuddered at the strong odor of the liquor, and pushed it from her.

"No! No!" she murmured faintly.

"All right, jest as you like. Here, you! Come up here and meet your new mother."

He waved his hand toward a strange group on the other side of the platform, and six young persons, three boys and three girls, awkwardly shuffled up and ranged themselves before her.

"This is my family," he went on, with evident pride. "Jack there's the oldest, and then Jane and Emmy and Tom and Lizzie and Ben. We always called 'em our babies, me and Eliza, and I reckon you'll find 'em a lively lot, but it's a good thing we've got 'em, because they'll help to keep you from getting lonesome."

Miss Sarah was dizzy, but she took



that firm grip on herself which twenty years of self-reliance had taught her. She sat up very straight.

"Jack," she said, "I wish to speak to you privately."

"Why, sure! Chase along there, you! Git them horses over in the shade and make yourselves scarce for a while. Now, go ahead, Sally. You don't care if I take a chew o' terbacker, do you? I 'low you're a lot more sensible than you was twenty years ago." He laughed.

"Jack!" faltered Miss Sarah. "Where—where is— That is, when are we to be married?"

"Oh, Squire Goss'll be here pretty soon. He's over in the next county, but he'll be along, all right. I've fixed everything convenient, Sally; brought the kids along to make it homelike, and the station-agent'll be a witness, and we'll jest have time to drive that fifteen miles to the ranch before dark, so's you'll have time to get supper."

Miss Sarah stared at him with wide-

"This is my family," he went on, with evident pride.

open, horror-stricken eyes. She knew she was dreaming; this was some awful nightmare, and yet—

"You'll like it when you get used to it," went on Jack. Miss Sarah shuddered. "I'm glad you got here just this time, too. I've needed more help ever since Eliza died, and I thought of you right away. Excuse me, Sally, but if you don't want any of this here stuff, I do; my throat's full of dust." He drew out the black bottle and took a copious draft. "Hello! There's Squire Goss now!" he cried, as a solitary horseman came riding up. "Now we'll be spliced

inside of five minutes, Sally, and skip for the ranch. You look tuckered out. No, we'll have to wait a few minutes till the east-bound express pulls out."

Miss Sarah stood up eagerly.

"Does it stop?" she cried, as a shrill whistle fell on their ears.

"Oh, yes! But——"

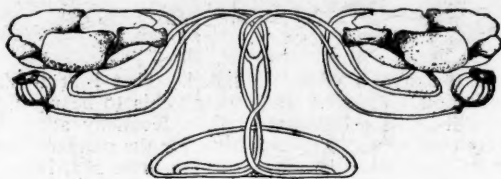
"Oh, thank Heaven!" cried Miss Sarah. "My trunk!" she called to the astonished agent. "Put it on the train. Be quick!"

The train had already stopped, and the conductor, watch in hand, was calling sharply: "All aboard! Step lively, madam, we're late!"

Miss Sarah did step lively. She fairly ran, and as she ran she called out: "Good-by, Jack! I've changed my mind."

A thunderstruck man, absently holding a large black bottle, watched the express roar its way eastward.

"Plumb crazy!" he said.



Once in a While

ONCE in a while to see you pass
 Along the street with placid brow,
 And catch your casual glance, and nod,
 Is all that I can hope for now;
 I look for nothing but to meet
 In some gay throng your formal smile,
 Or chance-acquaintance handclasp—oh,
 Once in so very long a while!

I ask no more, and none shall guess
 Of what we two alone may know;
 The vows you never meant to keep,
 The kisses wasted long ago;
 And those who in the crowded dance
 The favor of your laughter seek,
 Will little think that I have felt
 Your hot tears fall upon my cheek.

Yet it is something now to me
 That, good or ill, whate'er befall,
 The past remains unaltered, and
 I may at least remember all;
 And it is more that, down the years,
 Through days of conquest and of trial,
 We two, amid the unguessing throng,
 Must meet and speak—once in a while!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.



GENERALLY the actor's effort—call it imitation, instinct, art, what you will—is a thing that defies the logic of cold type. Try to get the player to tell you why he does this or that or how he produces the results that move to laughter or to tears, and you will find that in nine cases out of ten he cannot explain it, or if he does it is with an explanation that does not explain. Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, for instance, likes to talk about her work. But she does not try to elucidate the means. She is willing to let her methods speak in the result. That is one of the differences between her and her husband, Charles Rann Kennedy, author of "The Servant in the House" and "The Winterfeast," in which Miss Matthison is now playing. Mr. Kennedy with masculine insistence likes to reduce things to terms.

"Talk about the methods of tragedy," he suggested as we were carrying on a sort of aimless chat. "Tell him how you build up characters."

"No; I think I would rather not," smiled Miss Matthison; and as Mr. Kennedy, by way of elucidation, started on an analysis of his wife's rôle in "The Winterfeast," with incidental allusions to Greek drama—for classic knowledge is one of this scholar-playwright's strongest points—her hands went out in a gesture of mingled supplication, authority, and dismay.

"No! No! You mustn't," she in-

sisted. That isn't I—that's you. And wasn't this to be my interview?"

Mr. Kennedy admitted that it was. And for the moment that concluded, as the minstrels say, his share of the entertainment.

"Perhaps," said Miss Matthison, "you would be interested in knowing how I happened to play 'Everyman.'"

Now every one who knows anything at all about Miss Matthison knows that it was in this old Morality that she was first introduced to the American public, and it seemed likely that the revelation about to be made might be important. So when Miss Matthison said simply: "I played 'Everyman' because the clothes fit me," the confession, I fancy, fell somewhat short of what might be expected by people who recall the supreme beauty and the exquisitely spiritual quality of the actress' interpretation. For what appeared almost an inspired task the explanation seemed hardly satisfactory.

It was in 1902 that Mr. Greet first brought Miss Matthison to America. He wasn't very particular about mentioning the names of his actors, and so far as the programme and the printing were concerned, Miss Matthison's was a mute, inglorious 'anonymity.' However, that did not last long. The New York public, when it is interested, asks questions; and the theatrical reporter does the rest. Before the actress had been playing in Mendelssohn Hall a

week her name and her features became tolerably familiar to the public. When Mr. Greet discarded the Morality play and put on Shakespeare without scenery, Miss Matthison was on hand to lend distinction to his company.

"Mr. Greet had written to ask me if I thought I had reverence enough to act in a Morality," said Miss Matthison, "and I replied that I had reverence enough to act in the Passion Play if I wouldn't have to wear a farthingale. So one chief difficulty was easily overcome.

"During my entire career," continued Miss Matthison, "I have tried to avoid the stultification of the one-part idea. By that I do not mean one part literally, but the many parts that in effect are the same as one. Specialism, particularly here in America, seems to be almost essential to any sort of progress. It follows that the player with a particularly striking personality builds upon it, and very often builds only one kind of artistic edifice. Audiences, too, seem to like this kind of individualism. On the other hand, see how badly it works out in the case of an actor or an actress whose individuality does not happen to be pleasant. He or she may be ever so fine an artist, and yet is not so generously received. Then, too, we are so often obliterated in our parts. It isn't always a compliment to be loved by your audiences. I have played at times when the more the audience hated me the more I felt that I was truly in the rôle."

"Of course," interrupted Mr. Kennedy, "she means *Auntie*." *Auntie* being the rather unsympathetic part of the clergyman's wife in "The Servant in the House," which Miss Matthison has played with genuine artistic self-sacrifice, although it gave her no fair opportunities for the display of her most charming qualities as a woman or an artiste.

"Then you didn't like *Auntie*?"

"I wouldn't go so far as that. When you have lived with a woman as long as I was forced to live with *Auntie*," she laughed, "you naturally find something in her to like. The main point, however, was that I felt that people did not

like her. However, it really doesn't matter so much when you can play many parts. Then the occasional excursion into a disagreeable rôle has the charm of novelty and the advantage of varying one's effort. But it must be a terrible burden to have to go on playing unsympathetic parts all the time. I couldn't endure it. I want to be loved sometimes!"

Mr. Kennedy agreed that the demand was not unreasonable. So did I. And such unanimity is fatal to progress in an interview.

During the lull that followed, Miss Gladys Wynne, a niece of the actress, who has recently come from England, entered the room. I had happened to have the pleasure of a momentary meeting with the young woman on the day she arrived here, when, with Mr. Kennedy, she was having her first view of the Broadway skyscrapers and the New York skyline. The present occasion seemed propitious for the usual question to the foreign visitor.

"And now that you have seen more of us," I ventured, "how do you like us?"

"I simply adore you!" was the enthusiastic reply.

"There's a confession for you," said Mr. Kennedy.

And while Miss Wynne was explaining that *she* didn't mean what *he* meant, Miss Matthison and I tried to get down to a few facts in her own career.

"My first attempts at acting," she said, "were inspired by the discovery in the attic of our old Birmingham house of a chest containing a glittering array of theatrical costumes and properties that had once belonged to an uncle of mine, Arthur Matthison, who had been a fairly well-known actor and who for several seasons played with Edwin Booth. About this time, too, I found, while rummaging about the house, some well-worn copies of Shakespeare and Tennyson. The books were illustrated with crude old woodcuts, which, however, to my juvenile fancy appeared to have rare virtue. I feasted my eyes upon the pictures rather than the words, and Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott" im-

mediately became my ideal heroine. In the Shakespearean illustrations, however, I most fancied the gallant-looking men, and, with a blissful ignoring of my skirts, used often to parade around, imagining myself one or the other of the heroes. In time I came to be leading lady of the amateur theatrical company organized by one of my brothers and a young chum of his, Charles Rann Kennedy, whom he had first brought home one night for tea. He wrote then a little boyish play in which I acted and, as you may imagine, we often have a good laugh over it, now that he is a real, grown-up author, and I the principal performer in real theatres of his most important works.

"I had made several appearances as a reciter and singer in public by the time I was nine years old, both talents, if I may call them such, being inherited. My mother, Kate Wynne, had been a well-known contralto before her marriage, and my aunt, Edith Wynne, was one of the finest sopranos of her day. My father, Henry Matthison, had also appeared as an amateur actor, and in the Shakespearean plays given in our home town he sang the glees and catches. But he was not particularly inclined to the idea of having his daughter adopt a professional stage career, and some diplomatic maneuvering on my mother's part was necessary before I was finally allowed to go to London to pursue my vocal studies.

"Soon after my arrival there I got an opportunity to go on with Minnie Palmer in a musical comedy, "The Schoolgirl," and though it was rather a far cry from my Shakespearean ideal, it meant a start; moreover, it prevented more positive opposition from my father who naturally supposed that a week or two of that sort of thing might work a cure in my ambition. I sang in the chorus, but had one word which I was allowed to speak. Some one asked the question: "Who discovered America?" and it was my privilege to answer: "Columbus."

Touching lightly on her appearances in such musical plays as "Monte Carlo" and "The Ballet Girl," in which she

rose to leading parts, the actress' history of herself came now to Wilkie Collins' "New Magdalen" and Marie Corelli's "Sorrows of Satan," in which she progressed from the lyric to the dramatic stage, going through the drudgery of bad parts and performances of Shakespeare in musty little village theatres.

About ten years ago she joined Ben Greet's company, playing in the varied repertoire of stock, and subsequently appearing at the Comedy in London where she attracted notice in such rôles as *Rosalind* and *Lady Teazle*.

Then Miss Matthison was loaned to Charles Frohman for the London production of Henry Arthur Jones' "The Lackey's Carnival." Though the play failed, the London critics had awakened to the fact that in its leading actress the London stage had found another woman of unusual intellectual and temperamental gifts. The impression was subsequently verified when she appeared at the Old Charterhouse in "Everyman." Her first appearance in New York was in the old Morality play at Mendelssohn Hall, and the following year she made a number of appearances at the universities and at Daly's in Shakespearean rôles, acting also in open-air performances of "As You Like It" on Columbia Field. She has appeared with distinction in London in the "Electra" of Euripides, previously acting in Professor Murray's translation of "The Trojan Women." Her performance of the classic rôles was described by the critics as being of remarkable beauty, dignity, and force.

A member of Sir Henry Irving's company down to the time of his death in 1905, Miss Matthison was seen in such varying rôles as *Portia* and *Rosalund*, and subsequently played *Emilia* in Mr. Lewis Waller's all-star production of "Othello" at the Lyric.

Of the English actresses who have come over from time to time to add their grace and charm to the New York stage, few have made a stronger personal appeal. An artiste of very brilliant technical expression, she combines the advantages of an alertly sympathetic nature and unusual intelligence.



Beyond the Stars

By Eleanor H. Porter

ILLUSTRATED BY H. M. BUNKER

MISS PRISCILLA MURDOCK bent forward and flicked a bit of dust from her neat brown skirt—Miss Murdock disapproved of dust. The next moment she leaned back in her parlor-car chair, turning her eyes to the window, and her thoughts to her rapidly approaching visit.

It had been with many misgivings that she had accepted Mary Earle Perin's invitation to spend two weeks in her Ohio home. At college fifteen years before, Mary Earle, brilliant, talented, and affectionate, had been her most intimate friend. Since then their only intercourse had been by letter, as Mary had married at once and gone West, while she herself had remained in the East, steadily advancing in her chosen work so that even now she occupied an enviable position in the world of science and literature through her widely discussed book on "Fixed Stars."

As for the letters—to Priscilla Murdock they had grown more and more unsatisfactory. She told herself that

she did not expect Mrs. Perin to keep posted as to new stars and the reappearance of comets; but she did think the once brilliant college girl might write of something besides a baby's tooth or a boy's first trousers!

Miss Murdock did not care for children. To her they meant noise, disorder, weariness; she preferred quiet, tidiness, and rest. It was because of this that there had come the misgivings. She could not remember just how many children there were in the Perin nursery; there were two, at all events—possibly three. Before her eyes at that moment rose a vision of her friend's last letter. Mrs. Perin had written:

I should feel simply lost, Prixy, without my children. I should not know what was worth doing—all my reading, planning, studying is for them. Yesterday I finished a paper on "Play." I am to read it before the child-study class to-morrow. You have no idea how interesting that class is—you'll find out, though, for you shall go with me when you come.

As she thought of that letter now Miss Murdock frowned. "Know what

is worth doing, indeed!" she muttered, and took up her book, a profound study of the nebulae.

An hour later, at the little country station, Miss Murdock was met by a man and a note. She read:

DEAREST PRIXY: Mr. Scott, our neighbor, will give you this. It breaks my heart not to meet you, but a telegram from father just received says that mother has had a shock. I have barely time to catch the train. Am writing this on way to station. The children and Mr. Perin will give you a warm welcome, and I will write at once from Dayton. Am so glad to leave the children in such good hands as yours. Betty, in the kitchen, is a treasure, but of course has not your good judgment. I trust that mother is not so bad as we fear, and that I may soon return.

Your loving
MARY.

Miss Murdock crushed the note in her fingers, and dropped her arms with a gesture of despair.

"When is the next train—east?" she demanded feebly.

"East!" exclaimed the man. "Why, there isn't any until to-morrow. Sure, you're not beginning to talk of going back so soon!"

"I—I don't know," murmured Miss Murdock, her eyes longingly fixed on the twin rails disappearing in the distance.

At the end of the short drive to her friend's house Miss Murdock found two boys and three girls who dashed down the steps and executed a wild dance about the buggy.

"It's Aunt Prixy, it's Aunt Prixy! She's come, she's come!" they chorused gleefully.

Miss Murdock's back stiffened. She had never liked the name "Prixy"; and it was particularly obnoxious now, linked as it was with that absurd title of "aunt," to which she had no right, and for which she had less desire. Before her foot touched the ground, her temptation to leave the next day had become a determination. She told herself that she had her opinion of a man who would allow his children—to say nothing of the neighbors' children, for of course they weren't *all* his!—to make so rude an onslaught upon a guest, and a stranger at that.

Miss Murdock had intended to be very cold and dignified, but no sooner had she reached the ground than she was clutched and encircled by ten young arms and almost carried up the steps and into the hall. There she was plumped unceremoniously into a chair while five pair of hands attacked her coat, her gloves, her veil, and her hat; and all amid a deafening clamor of shouts and chatter.

"There!" ejaculated the tallest girl, after the coat and gloves had been tossed into one chair, and the hat and veil into another. "Now you're all fixed comfy, and mother said you were to make yourself right at home, and that we must love you and tend right up to you, because you'd be lonesome without her!"

"What'd you bring uth?" demanded the smaller boy, flinging himself into her lap.

With some effort Miss Murdock freed herself from the clinging arms and jerked herself to her feet, thereby tumbling the astonished child to the floor.

"You don't mean—you don't *all* live here?" she gasped.

"Of course we do!" asserted the five children. Then the tallest girl added gleefully: "This is Ted—he's ten; here's the twins, Bess and Belle—they're seven; that's Budge—he's five; and I'm Kitty, and I'm thirteen."

"If you please, ma'am, tea is served," interposed a pleasant-faced maid from the doorway. "I'm Betty, ma'am. Mrs. Perin said she'd tell you."

Ten young feet raced across the floor to the dining-room door, leaving the visitor standing alone.

"But I don't—I can't—where is Mr. Perin?" demanded Miss Murdock faintly.

"He's gone, ma'am."

Miss Murdock fell back a step. The bottom seemed dropping out of her world.

"Gone!" she cried.

"Yes, ma'am. He had to go to Chicago. He sent a message, but Mrs. Perin didn't get it. It came after she'd left. He didn't get hers, either—he'd

gone, too. If I might make so bold, ma'am, it's lucky indeed that *you're* here!"

"But I can't—I want—I must——" Miss Murdock's dry lips refused to say more.

"Mrs. Perin said she wasn't a mite afraid to leave them with you, ma'am," resumed Betty respectfully. "She——"

"Aunt Prixy, Aunt Prixy, where are you?" demanded an indignant chorus from the dining room.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, Miss Murdock walked slowly to the dining-room door. There she was laid violent hands upon, pushed into a chair, and plied with rolls, sauce, and cold meat, none of which could she eat, owing to the fact that Budge had appropriated her knees and was eating bread and milk from a bowl placed squarely in the middle of her plate.

Upon asking for her room after supper, Miss Murdock was noisily conducted to a pleasant chamber overlooking the garden.

"There, this is your room," volunteered Kitty; "but as long as there isn't anybody here to-night, of course you'll take mother's room so you can be near us."

Whereupon there ensued a wordy battle as to who should sleep with "Aunt Prixy"; and Miss Murdock, from sheer inability to speak, found herself suddenly given over to Budge for a bedfellow.

Several things happened in the next half hour. Teddy cut his finger; Budge fell downstairs; Bess upset the ink bottle upon her nightgown while insisting on writing a letter to her mother; and Belle flapped the lace curtain into the gas jet, frightening every one almost into hysterics with the blaze that followed. But in time the finger was bandaged, the bumps were bathed, the nightgown was changed, and the fire put out; then Miss Murdock went through the unusual experience of having one white-robed form after another kneel at her feet with clasped hands and tightly closed eyes for the evening prayer.

By the time Miss Murdock had sat-



"I am not your mother. I am not even your aunt."

isfactorily settled a sharp dispute as to who should have the last good-night kiss, her nerves were on edge, and her patience was strained to the breaking point. Supposing that now, surely, her task was completed, she drew a long breath and turned toward her own room. At the hall door she was arrested by an eager voice from the girls' quarters.

"We're all ready now, Aunt Prixy."
"Ready!"

"Yes, for the story, you know," explained Kitty. "Mother always tells one. You want to sit in that chair by the door, then we can all hear in the different rooms."

There was an ominous silence. Miss Murdock was gathering strength.

"I have no story to tell," she said coldly after a time. "You will have to do without it to-night." And she went out and closed the door. Behind her she left the silence of stunned amazement.

Miss Murdock did not sleep well that night. First there were her smarting hands and wrists, mementos of the blazing curtain. Then her bed—or, rather, Mrs. Perin's bed—wide as it was, seemed remarkably small. She wondered how one little body, no larger than that of Budge, could take up so much room. Twice she was dropping off to sleep when the thrust of a small foot in her stomach or of a smaller fist in her face brought her thoroughly awake. It seemed at times that Budge must have more than the usual complement of legs and arms, so omnipresent were they. She even rose on her elbow once to make sure that he had not. After that she rose frequently on her elbow, wondering, as she pulled up the blanket, how Budge could manage to uncover himself so often. Yet above all, and over all, and through all, was her dismay at the situation in which she found herself. To go, now that Mr. Perin was away, was out of the question; yet to stay seemed to Miss Murdock, in the face of her evening's experience, equally out of the question. She knew very well, however, that stay she must, and would.

The next day brought a telegram from Mrs. Perin. There was no change in her mother's condition, and Mrs. Perin could not think of leaving.

For twelve hours Miss Murdock submitted to the inevitable as best she could. The children—petted, indulged, and all their lives taught to consider themselves and their interests the only things of importance in the world—unhesitatingly demanded of their guest the devotion to which they were accustomed. In return they lavished upon her the demonstrative love of affectionate hearts that had never known a rebuff.

To Miss Murdock the day was a revelation. Remonstrance on her part was vain; she met always that ever-silencing "mother does it." Long before the day was over she came to have the most unflattering opinion of the intelligence of her old friend and schoolmate. She even caught herself wondering if the woman's mind could be sound.

The culmination of it all came after supper when the children ordered her to take down her hair that she might the more easily be "scalped" in their game of "On the Frontier." Miss Murdock rebelled then. Summoning the children before her with a sharp word of command, she said crisply:

"Children, it is high time we came to some sort of an understanding. I am not your mother. I am not even your aunt. I do not wish to hear that absurd Aunt Prixy another once. You may call me Miss Murdock, please; I prefer it. As for these foolish games, you must play them alone, or not at all. My mind—thank heaven—has been occupied with something other than amusing babies for the last fifteen years, and I positively refuse to bring it down to that level now. I will assist in your dressing and undressing. I will hear your prayers, and I will help you about your studying—if you ever employ yourselves in so sensible a manner. As for the rest, you must depend upon yourselves. Oh, and another thing: I will kiss you at night, or in the morning, just as you prefer. Once a day is sufficient, I think. Now, Budge,



"I don't care!" she choked, and recklessly brought the tally up to a week and a half.

come here, please, and let me unbutton your shoes. It is time you went to bed."

The children undressed that night in silence. While some of Miss Murdock's words had not been quite clear, there were yet enough left to convey her meaning in no unmistakable fashion. Even Budge understood so well that he

refused to say his prayers. There was no clamoring that night for a place at Miss Murdock's side, and the lady slept—or lay awake—in possession of a wide, unshared bed.

A second telegram the next day told of little change in the sick mother, and a letter soon following said that Mrs. Perin dared not leave, particularly as

she felt the children were so well cared for.

The twins cried when the letter was read aloud, and even Teddy blinked and turned away his face. By way of relief, both for herself and for the children, Miss Murdock suddenly determined to give them their daily kiss at this time instead of waiting until night; but, to her surprise—and to her chagrin, though she tried to think it was to her gratification—they turned their backs, Teddy even going so far as to leave the room.

One, two, three days passed. Daily letters from Mrs. Perin said that the sick woman remained about the same.

Miss Murdock grew day by day more restless, and the children more silent, furtive-eyed, and ill at ease. Twice Budge forgot and threw himself in the old way upon her lap, but a quick word from Kitty sent him scurrying away to the farthest corner of the room.

After a time Miss Murdock fell to watching the children. She found herself frequently slipping into the garden and listening to them in their play. She did not realize how interested she had become until one day a quaint saying of Teddy's sent an audible chuckle to her lips, so that the children heard and looked quickly over their shoulders. Seeing her, they fell silent, and a little later they crept away.

There was a queer choking feeling in Miss Murdock's throat then; indeed, a vague pain and unrest troubled her all that day afterward. She told herself that she must be a joy-killer indeed, and she tried to make amends by asking Budge that night if he would not like to sleep with her. Budge shook his head, and the ache still stayed in Miss Murdock's heart.

It was on Friday that the children failed to come in to dinner.

One, two o'clock came, but no children. Miss Murdock, now thoroughly alarmed, roused the neighbors and asked their aid. Men left their work and tramped the woods and fields far and near; but in vain. At half-past four a farmer driving into town brought a story of five children plodding along

the highway not far from the nearest large town; and two hours later galloping horses brought to the door Kitty, Teddy, Budge, and the twins, frightened and hungry, but unharmed.

All five at once were in Miss Murdock's arms, and she was kissing first one dusty face, then another, when Budge struggled free.

"Oh, Mith Murdock, Mith Murdock," he shrieked. "You can't kith uth again for motht a week—you've kithed uth five whole timeth already!"

Miss Murdock flushed and hesitated.

"I don't care!" she choked, and recklessly brought the tally up to a week and a half—if a kiss a day were the limit.

"But why, why did you do it?" she asked later, when the children were fed, bathed, and snugly tucked into bed—all but Budge, who lay in her arms.

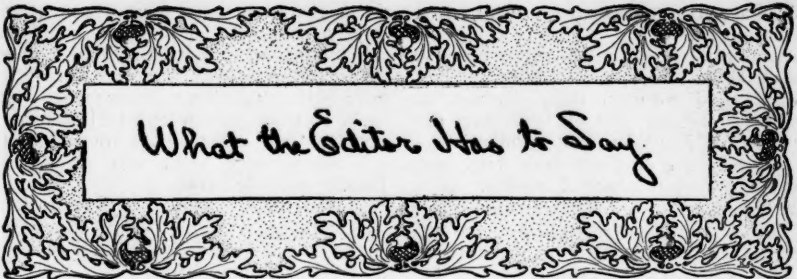
"We wath going to find muvver," confided Budge softly. "We thinked you didn't love uth."

"Oh, but I do, I do!" asserted Miss Murdock, with a spasmodic hug. "And, Budge, Teddy, all of you, I want you to call me Aunt Prixy—I *want* you to! And now I'm going to tell you a story," she added, "just as mother does when she puts you to bed."

Thus it happened that Mrs. Perin, arriving unexpectedly and coming softly up the stairs, heard the beginning of this somewhat astounding story:

"Suppose we choose for our subject, stars. You term any celestial body which appears as a luminous point, a star, children. Now some of these bodies are known as fixed stars, while others are called planets; but all are vastly interesting. For instance; suppose we were to consider first their distances from us. The various methods of ascertaining these distances depend upon three independent principles. The first method is from the parallax, by means of which the distance of the star is calculated by trigonometry."

Miss Murdock paused for breath. The listener in the hall held hers, while throughout both bedrooms was the absolute silence of an amazed, but respectful, attention.



What the Editor Has to Say

SOME months ago we promised a big detective serial by a new author. The manuscript of the story is now complete in our hands. We shall publish the first installment of the story in next month's issue. The title of the serial is "The Great Conspirator." The name of the author is Howard Fielding. Half a dozen people in the office have read it and have, with one accord, pronounced it the best detective story published since Anna Katherine Green wrote "The Leavenworth Case."

THE principal figure in the story is a woman of immense wealth, of strong character and intellect, and of great executive ability. We believe that many of the readers of "The Great Conspirator" will recognize in her a more or less thinly veiled picture of a living woman who has figured with considerable prominence in the public eye during recent years. Whether this be so or not, she will be welcomed by all fiction readers as an actual breathing entity, and not as a puppet controlled by wires in the hands of the author. The mystery, which is apparently baffling, concerns itself with the death, by shooting, of a woman companion. Suspicion is pointed at one after another of the characters in the tale, and not until the very last can the reader tell what the real explanation is. There is a strong and dramatic love story running through the serial, which will appear in either four or five large installments.

THE complete novel in the September issue is by Virginia Middleton, whose story "The Larger Life," which appeared in the May issue, attracted such widespread and favorable attention. Her latest story, "St. George and The Dragon," like "The Larger Life," is a tale of New York of the present day. The conflict in this story is between Hilda St. George, a young woman who has come to New York to do settlement work, and the "dragon," who turns out to be a political boss with a strongly corruptive influence in the large and densely populated East Side district which he controls. Like "The Larger Life," this new novel is intensely modern and realistic in treatment. It is woven out of the raw and sometimes unpleasant facts of life; but, for all that, it is not lacking in that thread of romance and higher feeling without which no story can be really compelling in interest. Whether the dragon is really slain, whether this feminine St. George rescues those in distress, what the manner of the conflict is—these things will be told you more interestingly by Miss Middleton herself, next month, than we could possibly set them forth here.

YOU must not miss the fourth of the "Cowboy Countess" stories, by A. M. and C. N. Williamson, which appears next month. This is one of the best detective stories in the whole series, and the girl from Texas plays the part of the detective. A ball

at the naval college in Greenwich, a missing motor car, a long walk in the moonlight, and an encounter with a strange wayfarer, are some of the incidents that lead up to the discovery of a plot against the lives of the King and Queen of England.



BETTER than usual, also, is the third story in "The Confessions of a Stenographer," by Anne O'Hagan. There is a delightful combination of love and business in this story, abundant interest, and a great deal of exciting incident. The girl who tells the story is employed in a real-estate establishment, and runs unexpectedly into a lot of entanglements, not only as to her own feelings, but as to some shady developments in the business itself, and matters which concern some of her own friends personally. Besides all this, the story is a truthful and vivid picture of the life into contact with which a woman who earns her own living is brought.



THESE are only one or two of the short stories in the September issue, any one of which is notable enough in itself to be spoken of as the biggest feature in a magazine. "The Caretaker" is a strong story by S. Carleton, author of "Bellegarde's Girl" and "The Ribbened Way," which appeared respectively in SMITH's and AINSLEE's magazines. "The Greenhorn and The Ambassador," by Edward Lucas White, is such an unusual story as to baffle description. Mr. White wrote for SMITH's, a year or so ago, one of the best ghost stories we have ever read. It was called "The House of the

Nightmare." Perhaps you remember it. Indeed, we are sure you remember it if you read it; it was so remarkable. We won't attempt to characterize or describe his latest story, except to say that it is good. We'll just ask you to read it and classify it for yourself.



BUT HALF A MAN," by Margaret Busbee Shipp, which appears in the September issue, is the story of an eminent physician who lost his memory, and with it the power to heal which had been his. His visit to a remote country place on Chesapeake Bay, the girl he met there, and the recovery of his powers, help to make the story worth remembering. "In the Church," by Edward Boltwood, is a story delightful and at the same time pathetic; "The Mystery of the Timber Tract," by Francis Metcalfe, has to do with some of the interesting developments of the legal profession; and "A Deal in Pigtails" is as funny as anything that Holman F. Day ever wrote.



RUPERT HUGHES has written for the September SMITH's an article entitled "Realism in Opera," which describes adequately, and in language that any one can follow, the later developments in modern Italian opera. If you expect ever to hear "La Bohème," "I Pagliacci," or "Cavalleria Rusticana," you will enjoy the opera a great deal more intelligently for having read what Mr. Hughes has to say about it. There will be another sermon "On Concentrated Optimism," by Charles Battell Loomis; and a funny nautical poem by Wallace Irwin, in the September issue.





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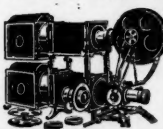
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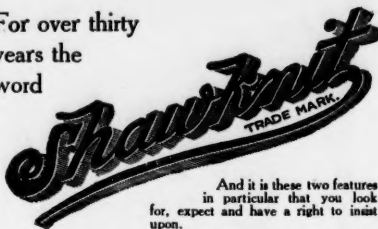
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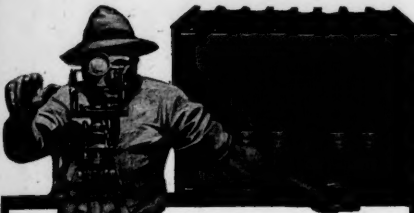


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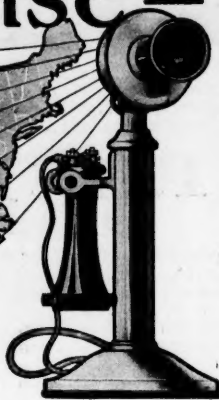
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